Sunday, March 13, 2011 | 44 | 7 sections / Vol. 35 / No. 97 / P15 | www.inq.dnr.net | Mobile Alert: Text INQ to 2899 (for subscribers only) | Text to subscribe: INQ YMAIL

HIGH AND DRY A glass-and-steel boat is stranded on top of a building amid a sea of debris in Ofunato, Iwate prefecture, on Sunday, two days after a devastating earthquake and tsunami hit Japan's northeast coast

Blast rocks 2nd reactor

Economic losses in northeast: $183B

AS THE humanitarian and nuclear crises in Japan escalated after the devastating earthquake and tsunami, the impact on the country's economy appeared to be spreading as well.

Economists say it is still too early to assess the full cost of the destruction from the record 8.9-magnitude quake and the 10-meter wall of water that hit the northeastern coast and triggered a nuclear emergency.

But leading risk analyst Eurasia Group estimated insured losses from the earthquake alone could reach nearly $30 billion.

Masazumi Hashimoto, chief economist for Japan at Credit Suisse, said in a note to clients that the economic loss would likely reach $183 billion (14 trillion yen)—next to the three-tiered official region.

ECONOMIC AGE

RADIATION ALERT Filipino scientists at the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute use a scientific device to measure the gamma radiation levels in the atmosphere near their reactor research facility in Quezon City on Monday

MAN'S BEST FRIEND WORRIED A worker with the female dog in tow rides in taxi to her daughter behind a glass panel at a makeshift facility in Minamisoma that evacuees, rescuers and workers people with high radiation levels.

AFP/JIJI

But Japan allays fears of radiation

SOMA, Japan—A second hydrogen explosion in three days rocked another reactor of a crippled nuclear plant on Monday, sending a massive cloud of smoke into the air and injuring 11 workers.

The blast was felt 40 kilometers away but the operator of Fukushima's Daiichi nuclear plant said the radiation level at the affected reactor was still at a safe level.

Later Monday, fuel rods at a separate reactor in the Daiichi plant were fully exposed after it lost its ability to cool down, officials said. The exposure raises the risk of the most overheating rods to traces of a potential third explosion at the plant.

The morning blast in Unit 3, which authorities have been trying to cool with sea water after a system failure in the wake of Friday's massive earthquake and tsunami, sent a huge plume for hundreds of people to stay indoors, said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano.

Operators leave the sea water flooding would cause a pressure buildup in the reactor containment vessel—and potentially lead to an explosion—but

FOREIGN A19

Manti mayor finds order in Japan chaos

By Mike Navales

IS CEBU there in order—at least for the Japanese.

Amid a power failure here and huge waves that wiped out coastal towns, the Japanese knew where to go and what to do, said Mantinlupa Mayor Aldrin San Pedro who was in Tokyo when the earthquake struck on Friday.

"The amazing thing about the experience was that I did not see people panicking or the streets where authorities scrambled the moment alarm..." San Pedro told

FRONT A6

Hoax text message triggers panic in Metro

By Jeanmarie I. Andrade, Jayson T. Garcil and Nika Cabuy

SALES OF fortified water and canned goods soared as some residents reported receiving unsupported rumors on "panic" gripped many residents of Metro Manila.

The panic buying of the said origin and the suspension of classes at Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) came as text messages circulated a warning that radiation from crippled nuclear plants in Japan was heading toward the Philippines.

HOME A11

Please don't do foolish things ...

By Joseph A. Ly, Krissie L. Abaro and Christine D. Avendaño

DON'T panic and please don't do foolish things.

Officials yesterday issued the advice as they dismissed as hoax text messages warning that radioactive fallout from crippled nuclear plants in Japan would reach the Philippines.

They urged the public to re-

FRONT A19

Misery in a rich Asian nation: No gas, no water

SENDAI, Japan—"I'm giving up hope," construction industry worker Hajime Watanabe, 34, said as he lined up at a closed gas station in the quake-ravaged Sendai City. "I had a good life before. Now we have nothing. No gas, no electricity, no water."

At a Red Cross hospital in Ishinomaki, a city also engulfed by the tsunami, he spoke, was left unsure as uniformed medics slept side by side with the wounded and dozens of recent injured people streamed in, hospital officials said.

In Japan's devastated coastal towns, rescue workers used chain saws and bread picks on Monday to dig out bodies.

By one of nine defeat tallies, misery seemed almost everywhere.

WORLD A30

Is PH ready? Senators set inquiry

By TJ Burgonio and Christine D. Avendaño

POINTING out that a 7-magnitude temblor could kill tens of thousands in Metro Manila, senators are opening an inquiry into the government's preparedness for earthquake and tsunami.

The Senate committee on environment and climate change are holding tomorrow a hearing on the status of the risk reduction and management plans of national and local government agencies, Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri said.

"The Japan earthquake was preceded by a destructive 6.3-magnitude earthquake in

SCIENCE AGE

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Family of 4 killed in fire

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Libya vow to stand or die

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'Exercise people's power to impeach'

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

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'Exercise people's power to impeach'

Tupas urges colleagues to cast their votes on move to oust Gutierrez

By Cynthia D. Balana, Joanneree I. Andrade and TJ Burgonio

THE HEAD of the House panel preparing the articles of impeachment against Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez yesterday urged his colleagues to exercise the people's power of impeachment by taking part in the plenary session this week and cast their vote on the matter.

Nicolás Rep. Niel Tupas Jr., chair of the justice committee who will deliver a sponsorship speech on the committee report and the articles of impeachment on Wednesday, said that as much as possible, lawmakers should not inhibit themselves from the vote, as doing so would require the impeachment process of the people.

"In impeachment cases, the voice of the people through their representatives should not be disenfranchised, otherwise it would defeat the purpose of the impeachment case," Tupas told the Inquirer in an interview. "This is a political act and not a judicial process."

As of yesterday, the committee was still making some revisions to its committee report and the articles of impeachment. Tupas said submit the documents to the committee on wide today and deliver a sponsorship speech tomorrow.

He said he expected chairperson of the Speaker's House members against the impeachment of Gutierrez, but was sure that the plenary vote would take place on Wednesday or Thursday next week at the latest.

"It's traditional and the last one-person, plenary voting on impeachment also takes place on the day of the sponsorship speech," Tupas said.

Tupas will be the chief prosecutor of an 11-man House body should an impeachment trial be convened by the Senate.

Earlier, Tupas said that more than 150 congressmen, including those with pending cases in the Office of the Ombudsman, had signified their intention to impeach Gutierrez for betrayal of the public trust.

Ombudsman ready

Gutierrez herself yesterday continued to maintain her innocence and said that she was prepared to face an impeachment trial where she would refute not the truth that she had never been influenced by anyone to accomplishing her sworn duty to uphold the rule of law.

"I was never influenced by the former first gentleman [Mike Arroyo]. I'm just doing my job. I was never influenced by my former bedmates. Can you choose your classmate or bedmate?" the Ombudsman asked at the Kapihan sa Manila Hotel.

Asked if she believed that a vendetta was behind the move to impeach her, she said, "I do not know how to answer that."

But she continued, "I feel that I am being purged up so, I feel that I am being deprived of my right to due process. I feel that I was never really given a chance to explain my position.

"I am reporting that the members of the House of Representatives would decide on the basis of the evidence and rules in accordance with their conscience. I feel that people who are in the same situation that I have would also feel that way."

The Ombudsman pointed out that case buildup was prevalent and a common problem in other government agencies given quasi-judicial powers, and that it was unfair to single out her office.

"We would lose all our prosecutors when prosecutors release cases are dismissed would be held liable for that. We do our best, we file what is proper. It is up to the court to determine whether what has been filed has merit. I don't think prosecutors should be fault-ridden," she said.

Predecessors' fault

She added that the number of cases handled by the Office of the Ombudsman should be considered, drawing attention to the 40 cases the agency handled each day or 10,000 cases a year.

She said that most of the cases cited to press for her impeachment were "inherited," and contended, "I am being pilloried for the unresolved my predecessors."

Senators yesterday agreed to convene the impeachment trial when their session resumes on May 9 after the Holy Week break, according to Senate Majority Leader Vicente Sotto III.

"We will convene as an impeachment court on the first day of the resumption of session," Sotto said in an interview hours after the senators met in caucus on the impending impeachment of Gutierrez.

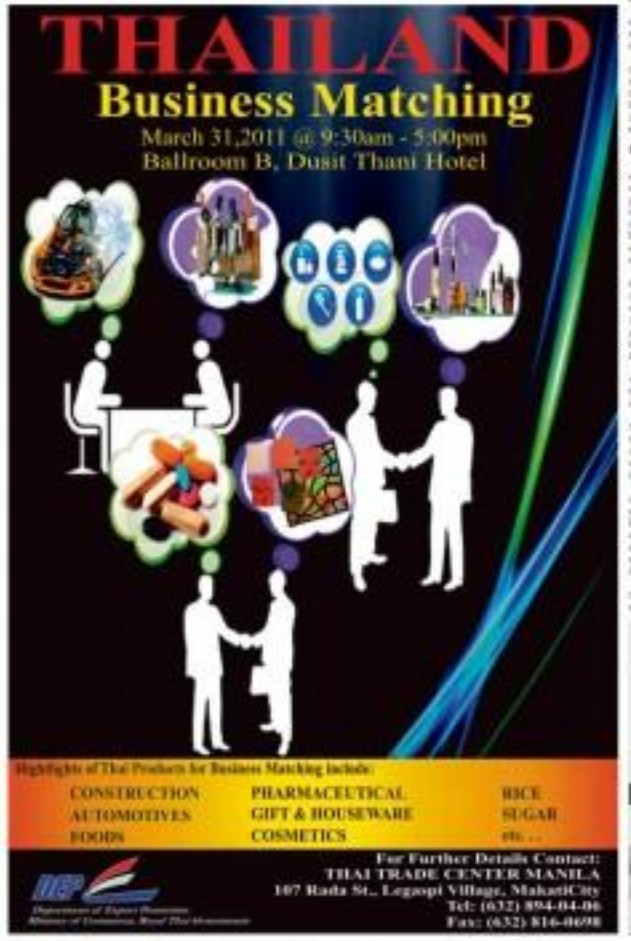
Pick 2 articles

Sen. John Arroyo said yesterday it might be more reasonable for the House to pick two articles of impeachment "where they have the strongest case," should it vote to impeach Gutierrez.

"After all, it is not robbing evidence but quality evidence that is decisive," said Arroyo, one of the prosecutors in the aborted impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada.

On this matter, the House lawmakers would "do well" to consult Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr., the chief prosecutor in Estrada's trial in 2000 to2001, he said.

Arroyo proclaimed that the House's planned transmittal of six articles or complaints of impeachment against Gutierrez would lead to a "protracted and drawn-out impeachment trial" lasting many months.



Pork releases not timed for impeachment, insist solons

BUDGET Secretary Florencio Abad Jr., a top official of the Liberal Party, promised to release the pork barrel allocations of members of the House of Representatives ahead of a crucial vote on the impeachment complaint against Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

But House leaders were quick to point out that the timing of the release of the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) was just a coincidence and not related to the impeachment complaint that at least 116 of the 284-strong membership of the lower chamber are expected to endorse in a plenary vote tomorrow.

A House source said Abad announced the pork barrel releases during an LP meeting last week where the agenda included the impeachment vote on Gutierrez.

Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr., the LP's point man in the House, said the pork barrel releases were part of the P245 allocation of lawmakers for the second half of last year, a representative entitled to P70 million in pork annually.

"The (pork barrel) releases have been ongoing since January. There have been no simultaneous releases of any kind. It has absolutely nothing (to do with the impeachment). I think I wasn't even aware until you asked the question that anybody would connect that because however your vote can any issue, a congressman is entitled (to the pork) and under this administration he will get it. Nothing will be withheld if he or she disagrees with the administration or with the leadership of this house. There is too much doing," said Belmonte.

Majority leader Rep. Neptali Gonzales II, another LP member, said that the PDAF had been agreed upon as early as last year and he did not see any connection with the impeachment vote against Gutierrez.

During the previous administration, then president and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was accused of using PDAF releases to gain favor during the votes of impeachment complaints filed against her. None of the impeachment cases got beyond the committee level. *Gil Cabacungan*

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Clinton phones Del Rosario: Let's meet soon

By Jerry E. Esplanada

EXPECT AN "early meeting" between Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto del Rosario and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

During a March 11 phone conversation, both Clinton and Del Rosario "expressed their desire for an early meeting so that they could work more closely in advancing the economic interests of the Philippines and the United States," according to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

The US Embassy in Manila, meanwhile, said in a statement that the two secretaries "noted that they looked forward to meeting soon and continuing to work closely together in advancing their countries' common interests."

In a news release, the DFA yesterday disclosed that Del Rosario "received a telephone call Sunday (evening) from Secretary Clinton who extended her congratulations to the newly appointed Cabinet member."

The two diplomats then "discussed issues of mutual interest between the Philippines and the US."

The two also discussed the "regional architecture similar to the Asia-Pacific region, notably the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit."

Del Rosario "welcomed the participation of the United States and the Russian Federation as new members of the East Asia Summit and expressed the hope that Russia would continue to play a central role in the EAS, which is a crucial building bloc in the evolving regional architecture."

Del Rosario noted that "the expansion of the EAS is a positive development, and the Philippines looks forward to working with the US to ensure that the EAS is a strategic and balanced forum."

US President Barack Obama is scheduled to join the 8th EAS in October in Indonesia, where Washington will take part as a full member of the forum for the first time.

During their phone conversation, Clinton and Del Rosario also "underscored the need to ensure maritime security in the Asia-Pacific and agreed that a way forward is the conclusion of a binding regional code of conduct in the South China Sea."

Enrile backs closure of jai-alai betting stations

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE President Juan Ponce Enrile has thrown his support behind the order of the Games and Amusement Board (GAB) to stop a gaming corporation from operating jai-alai betting stations around the country.

Enrile agreed the GAB was "within its right" to enforce the law within its jurisdiction and "hold down the reins."

"I will support it. There's no question about it," he said in an interview. "They're within their right to do it," Enrile added.

On March 3, the GAB ordered the Manila Jai-Alai Betting Corp. to close down all its off-fronton betting stations.

The cease-and-desist order will be served on all of Manilaiai's jai-alai betting stations all over the country, said GAB Chair Jose Ramon Guerrero and commissioner Mohammad Aquil Tamano.

Based on the GAB's investigation, there are at least 35 stations in Metro Manila taking bets on the jai-alai games conducted by Manilaiai in the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport.

Manilaiai operates jai-alai under a license it obtained from Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Cezo), according to the GAB.

Under its charter, Cezo may operate on its own or license to other companies related activities, including games, amusement, recreational and sports facilities, it added.

After establishing that there were at least 13 off-fronton jai-alai betting stations in the metropolis in December 2010, the GAB ordered the managers of the stations to explain why they should not be closed and the operators criminally prosecuted.

In a position paper submitted to the GAB on Feb. 22, Manilaiai and the betting stations claimed that the board had no authority to regulate jai-alai, saying that the law granting Cebu city authority has been repealed.

They also asserted that if even if the GAB had regulatory authority, Manilaiai did not violate any laws since it was "merely acting under the license granted by Cezo."

The GAB was created in 1951 through Executive Order No. 392 to exercise powers, duties and functions over horses and banca races in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, that were previously held by local governments.

The GAB argued that it had vested as the regulatory agency over jai-alai games from 1956 to 1987 when then President Corazon Aquino revoked the franchises of the Philippine Jai-Alai Gaming Corp. (PJAC) and the Philippine Games and Holidays Corp.

"There was a long hiatus in the operation of jai-alai because there was no entity with a legislative franchise. But the mandate of GAB over jai-alai remains and it will be a neglect of our duty if we allow the operation of betting stations outside the Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Freeport without government supervision and regulation," Tamano said in a statement.

In 2009, Cezo ordered Manilaiai to "cease and desist" from its jai-alai operations based on the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel's opinion that Cezo did not have the authority to franchise jai-alai, he said.

However, Meridien said Cezo and obtained a preliminary injunction from the Regional Trial Court of Aparri, Cagayan. Cezo reportedly appealed to the Court of Appeals and eventually to the Supreme Court, he said.

The GAB contended that the case was pending, but said the judicial interpretation of the Cezo law by the Aparri RTC and appellate court was that Cezo had the authority to operate or license jai-alai.

The respondents argued that the authority was transferred to PAGCOR in the late 1970s.

GAB argued that PAGCOR was merely the grantee of a legislative franchise to operate jai-alai, and was not empowered by PD 810 to authorize jai-alai operators.

It said the board's continuing authority to supervise and regulate jai-alai was recognized by no less than the Supreme Court in the 1993 case of Lito Ubaldo.

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SC OKs probe of Villar over C5 project

THE SUPREME Court has paved the way for the investigation of Sen. Manuel Villar by the Senate committee of the whole over allegations that he orchestrated a P486-million budget insertion for the C-5 road extension project to benefit his real estate empire in Bonifacio and Las Piñas cities.

The unanimous decision by the high tribunal paved in part the problem of Villar's allies in the Senate to stop the transfer of the complaint filed by then Sen. Justin Madrigal from the Senate ethics committee to the committee of the whole when the term of the former expired at noon of 30 June 2010.

The 19-page decision, written by Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, was promulgated on March 8 but made public only yesterday.

Thirteen justices concurred while two others, Associate Justices Antonio Eduardo Nachura and Arturo Brion, were on official leave.

The court said the transfer of Madrigal's complaint to the committee of the whole was an "extraordinary remedy" given the refusal by Villar and his allies to recuse from the case Drilon, now the new Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, who was the ethics committee chair.

The petition was filed by Villar Senators Jinggoy Estrada, Panfilo Lacson, Alan Peter Cayetano and then Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. against the Senate committee of the whole represented by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who at the time was Senate President.

Villar et al. complained that the transfer of the complaint was violative of his constitutional right to equal protection, that the rules adopted by the committee of the whole violated his right to due process and the majority quorum requirement, and that the Senate committee of the whole violated the due process clause of the Constitution when it refused to publish its rules despite its own provision that requires effectivity only upon publication.

In dismissing with Villar et al.'s contention that the transfer of Madrigal's complaint from the ethics committee to the committee of the whole was discriminatory, the Supreme Court noted how the Senate minority bloc led by Pimentel had refused to nominate their representatives to the ethics committee despite an appeal by Lacson for them to do so.

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Better job prospects keep Pinoy illegals in Libya

By Jerry E. Esplanada

SIX UNDISCLOSED number of undocumented overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have opted to remain in strife-torn Libya rather than return home to the Philippines when job prospects are low.

"Some undocumented workers had planned flying back to the Philippines was not a good idea. They apparently believe they could make more money in Libya," said Jasmin Grenado, one of the Filipino workers who returned from the North African country.

Grenado, a land surveyor at the Waha Oil Company, quoted members of a Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) team overseeing the repatriation of OFWs as saying that many "illegals" had decided to remain in Tripoli.

Grenado, 43, returned to the country last week from Tripoli with 36 other Filipino staff members of Waha, his employer for over 16 years.

Another former Waha employee, who asked not to be named, said some undocumented Filipinos were hired by the firm as "contractual employees."

"In Tripoli, some illegals make a living doing odd jobs. Others are employed like other professionals," said the source.

More OFW arrivals

The DFA said Philippine Embassy personnel in Tripoli were still on "mop-up operations" in eastern parts of Libya.

As of 4:00 a.m. of March 14, a total of 8,265 Filipinos had returned to the country from Libya.

"Normally they could be close to 9,000. But some foreign employers did not coordinate with us in the repatriation of their Filipino workers," said Carmelita Dimzon, head of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa).

Returning another 161 Filipinos from Libya were scheduled to arrive in the country according to the media affairs office of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

They were listed on the manifests of the following commercial flights: Philippine Airlines Flight no. PR475/5:00 a.m. (21 passengers); Gulf Air 150/10:35 a.m. (53); Etihad Airways 426/9:45 p.m. (68); and Philippine Airlines PR149/6:00 p.m. (19).

Repatriated by Owwa

Of the 161 passengers, 113 were repatriated by Owwa while the rest were sent home by the International Organization for Migration.

On Sunday, a total of 210 Filipino workers arrived at the Naia, according to Owwa.

Dimzon said Owwa had so far released P82.2 million in emergency grants to over 8,000 repatriates. Each returning worker is entitled to P10,000.

"It's not a big amount, but they will have to make do with that. It's only temporary relief," she said.

In another development, the DFA said it had updated its contingency plans for some 1,400 OFWs in Yemen.

Esther Ibongie Undersecretary for Administration Rafael Seguis said an advance team from the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh, which has jurisdiction over Yemen, was deployed to Sanaa to assess the security situation there and make necessary preparations to ensure the safety of Filipinos should the tension there get worse.

The DFA has raised the alert level for Yemen from No. 1, or heightened alertness, to No. 2, which means that Filipinos in Yemen must "restrict their movements to only those which are absolutely essential."

With a report from Philip C. Tubeo

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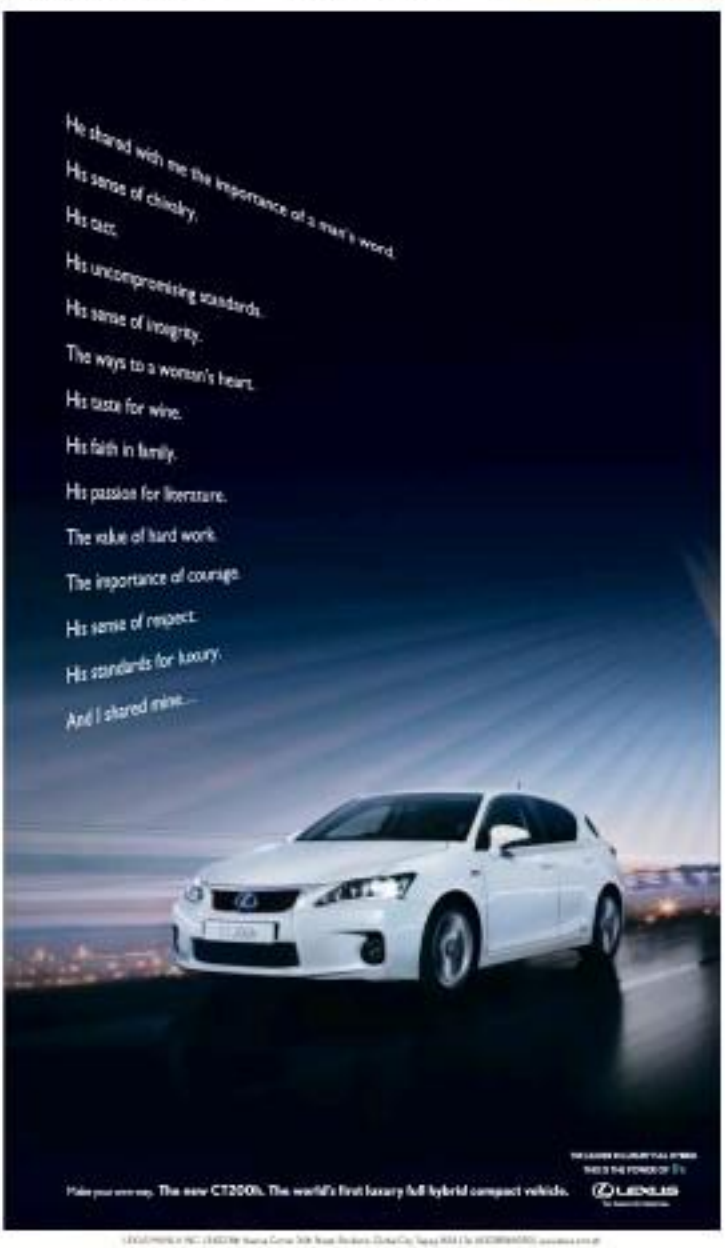

Help quake victims via Facebook, Twitter

HONG KONG— Technology giants Apple, Google, Facebook and Twitter are all offering digital ways to donate to Japan's recovery effort following the massive earthquake and devastating tsunami.

Apple has set up an option on its iTunes software to allow registered users to donate from $5 to $200 to the American Red Cross simply by clicking a button for the disaster-ravaged.

The Red Cross has also launched a campaign on Facebook through the social media giant's Causes function, initially aiming to raise at least $25,000 for relief efforts.

But it soon overtook this figure—raising over $500,000 by 0030 GMT (1 p.m., Manila time) from 13,000 donors, and raising its target to $75,000.

Tepco has given as much to the world over the years through their technology," commented Facebook user Kristin Skaggs. "Now it's payback time. All good people of world come forward and help Japan."

A service accepting donations via text message was also launched by the Red Cross, after a similar fundraising campaign raised over $20 million last year for Haiti quake survivors.

Updates

Micro-blogging site Twitter was updating by the second, continually refreshing information and advice as well as directing people to resources on the ground and offering ways to donate to help survivors.

"At Twitter, we feel that it is part of our duty to do whatever we can, no matter how little, to support those during times of need like this," the website's blog read.

"With that, we are looking for ways to support in any way possible people who have suffered in this earthquake."

Gamers also help

Hudongs, a label used by Twitter users to help organize messages—or tweets—had been created to find anything from evacuation information to medical updates.

Even gamers can do their bit.

Zynga, the world's largest social gaming company, hopes to raise $2 million for Japan Red Children's Japan Earthquake Tsunami Emergency Fund.

Money to FarmVille

The company is asking users to donate money through the purchase of virtual goods in CityVille, FrontierVille, FarmVille and its other games.

All of the proceeds from the purchase of seven potatoes in CityVille, radishes in FarmVille or kalo cows in FrontierVille will go toward Save the Children's efforts to provide relief in the Pacific.

Zynga has raised millions of dollars in recent years through similar campaigns, most notably for the relief efforts in Haiti.

Person finder

And Google's Crisis Response page was also geared up to offer people a way to help survivors on the ground as well as offering resources to find information.

Google's person finder service had notched up almost 140,000 records of people during messages seeking information on friends and family by Monday.

The site was updating, in English and Japanese, for the foreseeable every few minutes.

Links to Kimiko

A random search of the enormous Japanese name Hiroshi gave a snapshot of the state of the situation on the ground. There were hundreds of links to people of that name, many of whom had already been found alive.

But some remained unanswered for.

"I have reason to think this person is missing," a friend seeking Kimiko Sato wrote on the site.

And there was a stark message about Nozaki Kimiko: Gone [unclear] "someone/uncovered information that the person is dead."

For more information on where to go on Twitter to donate or get information, in Japanese and in English, visit: blog.twitter.jp/2011/03/blog-post—1.html

For more information on donating to the Red Cross on Facebook: https://www.causes.com/causes/campaigns/156521

For Google's crisis Response page, visit: www.google.com/crisisresponse/japanquake2011.html

For Google's person finder tool, visit: http://japan.person-finder.appspot.com/

For Zynga's services on donating digitally, visit Mashable: mashable.com/2011/03/12/japan-earthquake-tsunami-help-donate/ AFP

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Munti mayor finds order in Japan chaos

From page A1

inquirers yesterday.

"They [people] were very disciplined, very organized during the evacuation, and their rescue personnel responded quickly, with most if not all of them knowing each of their roles," he said.

The mayor flew to the Japanese capital on Thursday to receive a donated ambulance from Fujisawa City, located in Kanagawa prefecture within the Greater Tokyo Area.

He said Fujisawa was around 50 to 60 kilometers from Tokyo, and about 200 to 300 km from the epicenter of the quake.

It did not matter if a local government unit had the best equipment because what was important was people knew what to do, he said.

The evacuations that San Pedro witnessed proved how information was vital in disaster response.

"I think the people in Miyagi [prefecture] were overcome by the speed of the tsunami waves. Had the wave come in later, they might have evacuated properly with what I saw in Fujisawa," San Pedro said.

When the tsunami warning sirens blared at even this place, "people started to evacuate on their own," he said.

In contrast, local officials of Manila have to plead with residents to leave their homes when disasters strike, he said.

Within minutes after the quake, the Japanese officials were able to focus on efforts like distributing relief packs because people were doing their share, the mayor said.

He said packs were being handed out to evacuees, who for tea's a tea.

The Philippine delegation headed to Tokyo to return to their hotel, and it was at about 4 p.m. Friday when the group stumbled upon a massive traffic jam, according to San Pedro.

Since the subways and monorail lines were shut and freeways closed to traffic, the mayor said vehicles had to take secondary roads that led to Tokyo.

On the road, he again saw how orderly drivers were despite the calamity.

"If the road had five lanes, but there was space for two more, the Japanese would maximize the five lanes," he said. "If you want to go to either side, all you had to do was signal which direction and other drivers will give way."

Food ran out in convenience stores and some landmarks in gasoline stations were closed, San Pedro said.

The disaster response was also efficient that the Filipino delegation was informed "within minutes" how strong the quake was, initially placed at 8.8 magnitude, San Pedro said.

He said quick and reliable information helped officials assess the situations and address various concerns.

The mayor said the Filipino delegation had access to information because it came from the Fujisawa firm and was alerted.

The trip to Tokyo from Fujisawa, which took about 25 minutes before the quake, lasted 12 hours. With the Manila airport shut down, San Pedro said he looked for an alternative airport.

Members of the delegation went to Haneda airport and they spent another 12 hours on chance passengers or cross-international flight, which brought them to Hong Kong and eventually back to Manila. The delegation arrived on Sunday.

"This trip is one for the books," he said. "I think while I get invited to Japan again, this [experience] would probably pop up first in my mind."

Asked how he would adopt the Japanese disaster response he witnessed, San Pedro said a person's preparedness must begin at the grassroots with calamity drills as part of the education process.

Filipino troops in UN forces get higher pay

HERE'S good news for newly deployed Filipino soldiers in the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eduardo Oban Jr. said members of Philippine peacekeeping contingents going to civil war-hit countries of Haiti and Liberia will get a higher monthly allowance.

"The latest decision made by (former AFP chief of staff) Gen. Ricardo (David) was an increase in their (United Nations military) allowance from $800 to $900 per month," Oban told reporters.

Oban's remarks last in formal send-off ceremonies for the 110-strong contingent to Haiti and the 115-strong force to Liberia at the military headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo.

He said the contingents would get the higher monthly allowance.

There were the first UN peacekeepers deployed under Oban's watch and the first since the exposé on the alleged diversion of UN peacekeeping funds to the personal death fund and "jukwan" (restaurant cash gifts) of former top AFP officers.

Oban said the decision to raise the monthly allowances of peacekeeping troops by his predecessor was not a result of the exposé but because of the "chances" by post-conflicted countries.

"We (also) collected other data pertaining to the local allowances being received, and the $800 would be sufficient both on the side of the Armed Forces and the individual soldiers," he said.

The UN provides $1,028 per soldier representing "troop cost."

The AFP however, used to give its peacekeeping troops monthly allowances depending on rank starting from $600 for the lowest ranked personnel up to the full $1,028 for the colonel who heads the contingent.

The Haiti peacekeeping force led by a major commander Col. Abel Cayubit will leave on March 27 for a six-month tour of duty.

The peacekeeping force for the 48th mission of Liberia headed by contingent commander Col. Jorge Lumbay will leave in April also for a six-month tour of duty.

Oban said the Filipino peacekeeping troops will bring with them experience in safeguarding elections since Liberia will hold national elections on Oct. 11, its second since the end of a 14-year civil war, while Haiti will hold a run-off election on March 20. — Rose Pamaloran

Pag-Ibig gives quake-affected Pinoys reprieve

HUBBY members of the Home Mutual Development Fund, or Pag-Ibig Fund, who were affected by last week's killer earthquake and tsunami in Japan will be granted a six-month amortization on housing loan payments and membership contributions, Vice President Antonio C. Nieto said yesterday.

Furthermore, Nieto also the government's housing czar and presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers' (OFW) concerns, said Pag-Ibig members "can borrow up to 80 percent of their total savings" in the agency.

Nieto, who chairs the Pag-Ibig Fund board of trustees, said the financial breaks were aimed at "extending some relief to affected Filipinos and their families as they try to get back on their feet after the calamity."

He announced the agency to immediately draw up guidelines for the assistance programs so Fund members could avail of the package "at the soonest possible time."

Fund members based in Metro Manila may file their applications for the financial package at the Pag-Ibig Fund International Operations Group office in Makati City. Those in the provinces may file their applications at the agency's nearest branch.

Earlier, Pag-Ibig Fund offered a similar assistance program for members who fled the conflict in Libya.

Like the OFWs in an Libya, Filipino workers in Japan have started to come home relief in the wake

"OFW members can either withdraw their fund contributions or ask for a six-month moratorium on the payment of their (housing) loans and loans," said Nieto.

"All these are in addition to the P10,000 financial assistance given to each returning OFW by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration," Nieto the other day told the audience at an event organized by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

The Pag-Ibig board of trustees "approved over the weekend the financial aid package for OFW repatriates," said Jerry Salgado, Nieto's media affairs.

Earlier, Nieto called for a serious review of the government's contingency plan for OFWs, especially those based in the Middle East.

He said there was a need for "periodic reassessments" of such plans, as well as of the political situations in the countries in the region. — Jerry E. Esplanada

COMFORT ZONE A young evacuee looks on at an evacuation center in Kamaishi, Fukushima prefecture, as Japan's nuclear crisis intensified on Sunday. Japanese authorities raced to contain the threat of multiple reactor meltdowns and mass evacuations after 170,000 people from the quake-hit and tsunami-ravaged northeastern coast where fears grew about possible radioactive contamination. AP PHOTO/KYODO

Misery in a rich nation: No gas, no water

From page A1

Three days after a massive earthquake and tsunami that police said possibly killed more than 10,000 people in one province alone, the world's third largest economy faced a mounting humanitarian, nuclear and economic crisis.

About 500,000 people have been evacuated, UN officials said.

The badly wounded nation has seen whole villages and towns wiped off the map by walls of water, triggering an international humanitarian effort of epic proportions.

Coffins running out

In hours-parched areas, one of these hardest hit areas, rescue officials said they were running out of body bags and coffins and may have to turn to foreign funeral homes.

"It's just overwhelming," said Fujimatsu, a government official in Iwate.

"I never imagined we would be in such a situation," said the construction worker Watanabe.

He was first in line at the closed gas station in Sendai but was later told that if the station opened at all, it would pump gasoline only to emergency teams and essential government workers.

Watanabe said he was surviving with his family on 60 half-liter bottles of water that his wife had stored in case of emergencies.

He walked two hours to find a convenience store that was open and waited in line to buy dried ramen noodles.

In cities and towns, millions of people spent a third night without water, food or heating in near-freezing temperatures along the devastated northeastern coast.

Tsunami scare

A Japanese police official said 1,000 washed up bodies were found scattered on Monday across the coastline of Miyagi province.

This raised the official death toll in about 1,300 but the Miyagi police chief has said more than 10,000 people are estimated to have died in his province alone, which has a population of 2.3 million.

Friday's double-headed tragedy has created unimaginable misfortune for people of this industrialized country that has not seen such hardships since World War II.

In many areas, there is no running water, no power and few basic tools for gasoline. People are suppressing hunger with instant noodles or rice balls while dealing with the loss of loved ones and homes.

"People are surviving on little food and water. Things are simply not coming," Sato said.

The pulverized coast has been hit by more than 150 aftershocks since Friday, the latest one a 6.2- magnitude quake that was followed by a new tsunami scare on Monday.

Sirens availed and soldiers barked out orders: "Head high ground! Get out of here!" The incessant warning turned out to be a false alarm.

Rolling blackouts

Search parties arrived in Iwate for the first time since Friday to dig out bodies. Ambulances stood by and body bags were laid out in an area cleared of debris, as fire fighters used hand picks and chain saws to clear an indescribable jumble of timber, rubble, plastic sheets, roofs, sheds, twisted cars, tangled powerlines and household goods.

Helicopters loaned overhead, surveying the destruction that spanned the horizon. Officials said one chief of the city of 38,000 people was flooded and thousands were missing.

All workers and search teams from across the world have joined 100,000 Japanese soldiers in a massive relief push, while temperatures plummeted.

At least 1.4 million households had gone without water since the quake struck and some 1.9 million households were without electricity.

Planned rolling blackouts of about three hours each were meant to help make up for a seven shortfall after key nuclear plants were disabled.

'There's no food!'

Within the dark and frigid wards of Iwate General Hospital in Ishigo town near Sendai, some 130 patients lay in their beds or slumped in wheelchairs, sweating inconsolably.

"There is no food!" an old man in a blue garment cried, as one of the patients died.

The earthquake and tsunami heaped untold new misery on those already suffering—thousands of elderly, infirm and sick people in hospitals that were laid to waste by the violent shaking and the walls of water that followed.

Sam Taylor, the spokesperson for Doctors Without Borders, an international group that has sent a team to Japan, said there were longer term concerns about the elderly, many of whom are fragile and may be living on little food and water without their lifesaving medicines.

The Iwate hospital had about 200 patients when the earthquake hit, tossing its medical equipment around and collapsing part of the ceiling.

All of its food and medicine was stored on the first floor. Everything was lost in 30 minutes when the tsunami came.

Panic buying

Store shelves and gas stations emptied across the country as panic buying took hold.

"The main humanitarian needs are food, drinking water, blankets, fuel and medical items which the government and private sector in Japan are urgently mobilizing and sending to the affected area," said the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Radiation blankets began across the nation in a bid to ease power.

The United Nations said power and gas supplies were critical, with the Japanese winter bringing subzero temperatures overnight and snow and rain forecast for coming days.

Soldiers were distributing heaters, emergency rations, blankets and water, and the military said some 10,000 people had been rescued.

There had been landslides in dozens of areas and roads, bridges and railways had been washed away. Boats, planes and helicopters were being used to ferry supplies and collect survivors. *Reports from AP, Reuters and AFP*

'Dirty Harry' tsunami film pulled out in Japan

TOKYO—A film distributor yesterday said it had decided to stop showing Clint Eastwood's tsunami movie "Hereafter" in Japan following scattered quakes.

A Warner Entertainment Japan Inc. official, Satoru Otani, said theaters would no longer show the film. The terrifying tsunami scenes in the movie were "not appropriate" at this time, he said.

"Hereafter" opened in Japan in late February to around 140 theaters. Warner Entertainment initially planned to show the movie until late March. *AP*

PAL agrees to bargain with union

By Philip C. Tubeza

PALEG with another notice of strike, Philippine Airlines (PAL) yesterday agreed to submit a counterproposal for a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with its ground crew union, a labor official said yesterday.

Reynaldo Bitanlao, National Conciliation and Mediation Board executive director, said the agreement came during a conciliation hearing between PAL officials led by company president Jaime Bautista and officers of the PAL Employees Association (Palea) that lasted from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. yesterday.

"[PAL] agreed to submit a counterproposal, either through e-mail directly to Palea, on March 28 at the latest," Bitanlao said.

Palea had submitted its 2011 proposal back in October. Last week the union filed another notice of strike to compel the international flag carrier to negotiate a CBA.

Yesterday's hearing was the second conciliation conference held on that strike notice at the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) office in Intramuros, Manila.

Palea said the first conciliation meeting failed because PAL refused to negotiate on all other bargaining issued on the airline's outsourcing plan, which Palea opposed.

If PAL were allowed to outsource several of its requirements, hundreds of its employees would lose their jobs.

"DOLE must uphold the law. It must order PAL to do its legal duty to bargain with Palea," said Leny Rivera, union president and vice chair of the Partidong Manggagawa.

Palea called on its members to prepare for a strike as the means to make PAL do its duty to bargain under the law.

"The notice of strike is the first of a series of steps that will lead to a strike at PAL," said Rivera.

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65,000 aliens register with BI this year

More than 65,000 foreign nationals residing in the Philippines swooped to the Bureau of Immigration to file their annual reports this year, the BI's alien registration division said yesterday.

In a statement, BI-ARD chief Emilia Mirasol said a total of 65,115 resident foreign nationals reported to the BI this year, which was higher by 5,125 or 8.53 percent than the number that filed last year.

The Alien Registration Act of 1950 requires aliens to personally report to the BI every year. The filing of the report began at the start of the year and ended on March 3.

The law provides that foreigners should come in person to the BI main office, sub-ports, field offices or satellite offices within the first 60 calendar days of every year for their annual report.

Mirasol also revealed that the government earned more than P19.5 million in fees paid by aliens who reported this year.

Under the rules, each foreigner must pay a fee of P300 and legal research fee of P30.

Aside from the BI main office in Intramuros, Manila, where the bulk of the foreigners went, various immigration field offices nationwide were also open for the filing of the annual report. — Jerome Aning

Group sets meet on helmet law

A LIMLEN enforcement group is sponsoring a multisectoral forum to discuss the implementation of Republic Act No. 10054 or the Motorcycle Helmet Act of 2009 which enforces drivers that all motorcycle riders wear protective head gear.

The San Juan Civilian Volunteers Organization (SJCVO), together with the government agencies concerned, will hold the consultative assembly aimed at coming up with doable guidelines for the better implementation of the law that was authored by Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. to address the alarming rate of motorcycle accidents.

The government agencies are the departments of Interior and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Transportation and Communications, and Education, the Land Transportation Office, the Bureau of product standards and statistics, and traffic enforcers.

In a letter to the SJCVO President Aquino lauded the group and emphasized the importance of road safety and responsible driving.

"The ideals of volunteerism and social responsibility truly find meaning in your activities aimed at people empowerment and community development," the President said.

Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales, in his message to the SJCVO expressed concern over the increasing number of vehicular accidents.

"The law must be strictly implemented. Proper education of our motorists is also essential. We commend groups such as the SJCV for helping out in the dissemination of information and implementation of this act," he said.

Benavidez Museum Tan, SJCV chair, said everyone was invited to the forum, particularly motorcycle riders and dealers, helmet distributors and other interested parties.

The forum will be held at Club Filipino on March 18 from 1 to 5 p.m. A P1,000 registration fee to cover materials and snacks will be charged but will be waived for members of the media. For more information call 7340349 or 0917-5598801. — Rayen Sadi

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Fallout from Japan nuke emergency hits PH

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE FALLOUT from the nuclear emergency in Japan triggered by Friday's temblor and tsunami has reached the Philippines.

In a privilege speech yesterday, Pangasinan Rep. Kimi Cojuangco said she would seek a "moratorium" on debates on her bill pushing for the revival of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) until Japan contained the threat of hydrogen and meltdowns at its Fukushima nuclear power plants.

Cojuangco's husband, former Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco, decided for the BNPP revitalization the 14th Congress, saying it was the only viable alternative to the country's energy requirements to reduce its overdone growth.

She, however, continued to defend nuclear power in the face of vivid images of Japan's crumbling plant troubles and declared that she was not yet giving up on her nuclear husband's advocacy.

"Fukushima is not Chernobyl because of containment. Even if a meltdown will occur, it would be safe because of containment. Make no mistake, this (it) contains most fail-safe Fukushima. But I will immediately withdraw House Bill No. 1299," Kimi Cojuangco said.

The $2.3-billion, 600-megawatt facility in Bataan was mothballed without generating a single kilowatt of power 23 years ago by then President Corazon Aquino on safety and corruption issues.

Cojuangco said that the BNPP was a much better plant than Reactor in Fukushima which were built earlier in the late 1970s, when the building technology was "primitive."

"What is sad to me is that the Philippines would have lost the only viable alternative to fossil power which is cheap, safe and reliable. The implications are most fatal to Fukushima. But I will immediately withdraw House Bill No. 1299," Kimi Cojuangco said.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago shared Kimi Cojuangco's view.

"There are dramatic calls because out of superstition and ignorance that we should stop all work in operating the BNPP. Let us be very, very careful with our facts," Santiago said.

Right time for review

Mark Cojuangco, in a press conference at the House yesterday, declared his willingness to abandon his advocacy if it would be proven that Fukushima power plant came short in its safety standards that could have endangered the adjacent population.

"This is the right time for the whole world nuclear industry to be in a period of introspection, to examine the events of the Fukushima and see if all the assumption for safety is still valid and in adjustment to be made and if so what are the adjustments," said the former congressman.

"I'm imposing upon myself a temporary moratorium on my advocacy for BNPP until such time that enough information, analysis, becomes available in order to see if I can make proper adjustment."

Unlike in the day, Davidsonian Rep. Rufus Rodriguez moved to kill the BNPP revival shelved proposal, saying in view of the unsolved lingering concerns arising from the nuclear crisis in Japan.

Galvez warned that wells within 100-kilometer radius of the BNPP would be devastated from a meltdown.

Reports anecdotal

Mark Cojuangco told the legislators by phone from before the national government decides to close the door on his host plants, "it should first wait for findings of expert bodies, like the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international groups."

"As of now, the reports we are getting are more anecdotal and not from highly qualified people," he said.

Cojuangco added that data from the International monitoring Night news, Bhutto country-nuclear power plants are like sanity mapping plant, under-water, and it is impossible for them to fake anything about what happened."

Citing news footage of the Japan earthquake, Mark Cojuangco observed that the nuclear power plant buildings in Japan did not collapse even if other structures, like Ozan as of Fukushi, crumpled after the tremor.

Worst-case scenario

"It looked like the plant's containment building in Fukushima has withstood the earthquake's intensity. It could be possible, and it has been proven yet, but no continuously leaked from the building. This could

SHELVED AGAIN A campaign to use nuclear power for the country's electricity resurfaces, just as bubbling the nuclear emergency in Japan. Photo shows the idle Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in Morong, Bataan, a grade ribbon project which cost the country more than $2.3 billion to construct in the early authoritarian days. INQUIRER FILE

mean that the safety engineering is successful," he said.

Mark Cojuangco called the Fukushima experience "the worst-case scenario" and a "test case" to the nuclear power industry.

"Based on the experience, experts will surely come up with better regulations to govern the industry," he said.

"If we turn our back on nuclear power, that would be sad because it has been proven to be an alternative source of power that is safe, clean and cheap. If the worst would turn in back to nuclear power, we won't have recourse to the increasing cost of it, the dirty and cold. This will affect more the poor countries like the Philippines," he said.

But a report prepared by geologist Ruben Rodolfo and geologist Carl Rumbaoa, the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, showed the fate of the BNPP and around it.

"The active status of the Bataan plant poses the greatest threat to the well-being of the Filipino people and their environment in any operation and safety of natural-hazard scientific experience," and Rodolfo, professor emeritus of the University of Illinois.

Natural dangers

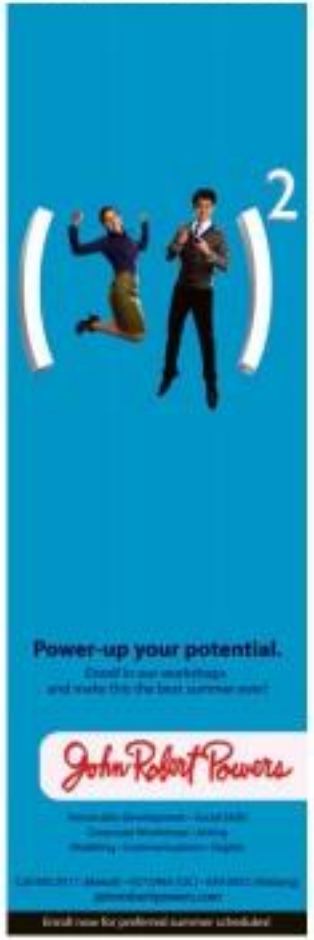
Rodolfo determined the report in July 2010 as "the natural dangers are being grossly compounded by nuclear proponents of power influence who know little geology."

The BNPP site, he said, is on the flank of Mt. Natib volcano or Tripod Point.

"Like Mt. Pinatubo, this volcano is 'coldemorgan,' meaning that its eruptions are characterized by violently separated materials, but very violent, and leave a large caldron or depression at its summit," he said.

Mt. Natib, he said, has two calderas.

"If caldera size is a measure of eruptive power, the one that produced the large Natib caldera was much stronger than that Pinatubo inception in 1991," he said. With reports from TJ Burgonio in Manila, Yolanda Garcia, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon



Hoax text message triggers panic in Metro

From page A1

A text message reportedly from the BBC said Asian countries needed to take precautions from the radiation. The message advised people to remain indoors for the first 24 hours, close doors and windows, "wash nails and skin with Betadine (above the thyroid area is...) because radiation hits thyroid first."

Betadine is a common brand of antiseptic made of povidone-iodine mixed in water.

The text message also said the radiation leak may hit the Philippines starting 6 p.m. yesterday.

Others rumors spreading yesterday included the need to wear rain suits in case of a downpour in the day, might get burned from acid rain.

Hoax

Office4 dismissed the text messages as a hoax.

An employee of a Mercury Drug branch in Ermita, Manila, who requested anonymity because it was against the company's policy to grant media interviews, confirmed that calls of the antiseptic surged by noon.

She said she herself bought a small bottle of betadine "just in case."

"I already bought one for myself. It (the advisory) said over the BBC) may be true or not but we cannot be sure," the drugstore employee said.

She told the Inquirer that other branches reported a 50-percent increase in sales.

A simple query of "Do you have Betadine?" made a pharmacy assistant in Manila immediately hand to her fellow clerks and now, in Filipino: "Yes! Betadine has been selling out!"

Better safe than sorry

When prodded about the statement, Nonie V. Flores, a pharmacy assistant at Shinoa's, still Manila, said the increased sales were due to a circulating text message which she forwarded to the Inquirer.

Flores said the drugstore's stock of betadine had run out by the day, as rumored accounts, "indeed it has increased by half." scientific basis, she admitted. "I don't really know, but it's better to be safe than sorry."

Safety of godchildren

An Inquirer employee said she had off to a Mercury drugstore at the Kingwood Commercial Center in Cubao to buy Betadine after she received a text message from a friend advising her to use the antiseptic.

"I got worried for the safety of my two godchildren, 7-year-old Joshua and 10-month-old Frisha," Helena Francia said.

She said she hopped on a motorcycle and went to the nearest Mercury Drug branch.

"I searched for Betadine and there were about five of us, fellow 'mother hens'...combing a quick dash to the shelf where Betadine. When I became of realize I looked so ridiculous," she said.

"They said that they received the SMS text warnings and were concerned for the safety of their family, especially the children."

Francisco said she went back to her residence and scrubbed the medicine gold children.

PUP main campus

Students of PUP on its main campus in Sta. Mesa, Manila, were sent home at 1 p.m. yesterday after its president Dante Guevarra repeatedly received a text message that radioactive dioxide from Japan would reach the country by 4 p.m. PUP has 50,000 students in Metro Manila.

A PUP official said she and several others were at a meeting in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs when they received the announcement that classes had shouted to suspend all classes and all activities after receiving the text.

"In fact, we were surprised because the newspapers already published the news that the radiation rays not likely to reach the Philippines, that it is expected to occur like in Hawaii," said the official, who requested anonymity.

"But we were told that the instruction came from the (PUP) president. The class suspension comes on a semi-official since we are on the last week of the semester and everyone is coming to the final exams," she added.

Edna Bonsubre of the university's public affairs office said the suspension of classes at the high school and college levels on PUP campuses in Sauyo and Metro Manila was imposed at around 2 p.m.

"Everyone, including the personnel and professors, went home," Bonsubre said over the phone.

Ease parents' anxiety

In a statement, Guevarra said he ordered the suspension of classes "in order to ease the anxiety of hundreds of parents who were calling and asking the university about their children studying in the university."

Guevarra, however, clarified that the decision to suspend the classes had nothing to do with the press triggered by the supposed BBC advisory on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant explosion.

"(This is) just a simple correction and concern on the welfare of the 65,000 students whose parents and other relatives are so anxious about," the statement said.

Guevarra said the action was also aimed at allaying "further fear and stress" associated with the PUP's location just across the roadway of depot, "which sometimes emits toxic gases."

The PUP administration would be issuing an advisory when classes would resume, Bonsubre said.

Victor Tuvay, disaster management coordinator of the education department in Central Visayas, said many parents flocked to schools early yesterday afternoon because of the radiation scare.

The parents reportedly asked the teachers to dismiss their children early. With reports from Cathy Rosauro, Kristine Felino Hidalgo and Julie M. Aurelio in Manila, and Claudette B. Mongaya, Cebu Daily News

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Are we ready?

EDITORIAL

WE HAVE seen the horrible death and destruction that a combined high-magnitude earthquake and tsunami can cause in a prosperous, well-prepared and disciplined country like Japan. Are we prepared in case a similar disaster hits the Philippines?

The Philippines, like Japan, lies in the Pacific Ring of Fire, and is very vulnerable to earthquakes, among other natural disasters. In just the past 21 years, the Philippines has been struck by huge temblors ranging in magnitude from 5.1 to 7.9, resulting in great loss of lives and property. These included the Ragay Gulf earthquake of March 17, 1973, magnitude 7; Mindoro earthquake of November 1994, m7.1; Bohol earthquake of June 14, 1990, m7.1; Casiguran earthquake of August 2003, m7.3; Moro Gulf earthquake of Aug. 17, 1976, m7.9; and Luzon earthquake of July 16, 1990, m7.9.

The Moro Gulf quake spawned a tsunami that devastated more than 700 kilometers of coastline, collapsed hundreds of buildings and houses, left 100,000 people homeless and killed almost 5,000. In scale of death and devastation it is closest to the Big One that recently struck Japan.

Scientists have predicted that a 7.2 earthquake could damage 35 percent of residential buildings, 32 percent of buildings between 10 and 30 stories high, 14 percent of buildings between 30 and 60 stories and 30 to 50 percent of all government buildings. It could cause 33,500 deaths, as additional 18,000 deaths from fire, and 114,000 injuries.

About the safest haven from earthquakes in the Philippines is the pristine and paradise island of Palawan. Blessed by the Lagting, a professor of the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences, said that there are hardly any faults under the island.

The faults in the Philippines are many: the Manila Trench, Philippine Trench, West Marikina Valley Fault System, West Davao Fault System, Davaoson Fault System in Cagayan, East Zambales Fault, Bo Fault and Lubang Fault.

With the country so vulnerable to earthquakes, what is its state of preparedness for a natural disaster? Scientists and other professional people almost unanimously agree that it is not well-prepared.

First off, we would recommend that all proposals to set up new nuclear power plants to help solve the power problems of the country be put on hold. We have seen in Japan how nuclear power plants set on fire by earthquakes can make a combined earthquake-tsunami disaster to a triple catastrophe that could affect not just thousands, but millions of people.

These are among the recommendations made by officials of government agencies and offices such as the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology and the Department of Public Works and Highways as well as architects and urban planners such as architect Felino Palafox Jr.:

1. Conduct a structural, hydrologic and geologic audit of all private and public buildings to determine their structural integrity.

2. Build stronger structures, ensure that they strictly follow the building code and ensure appropriate land use.

3. Make sure that housing projects are not built on earthquake fault lines, at the foot of mountains where landslides could occur and on coastal areas where there could be storm surges, and tsunami.

4. Prepare hazard maps for earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, tsunami and floods.

5. Learn lessons from countries unprepared for disasters, like Haiti, as well as best practices from advanced countries like Japan, the United States, Taiwan and South Korea.

6. Update the building and structural codes.

7. Create citizens' awareness of the need for disaster prevention and preparation. (By the way, let's do away with silly practices such as making schoolchildren put their hands or books over their heads in drills for disasters. Hands and books will not provide much protection. Let's think of a better way to protect schoolchildren.)

8. Secure open spaces such as parks, playgrounds, etc., which can be used in disaster prevention and management.

9. Get all the local government units, from the provincial government down to the barangay, involved in disaster preparedness.

10. Enhance the educational program to include a course on disaster prevention and preparedness.

Big earthquakes have been striking with alarming frequency all over the world. We in the Philippines have to be especially prepared and instill discipline in our people.

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'Sure thing'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"THERE IS no sure thing as 'for sure.' That's the only sure thing I know." The astute philosopher's nineteenth name to outsit on reading the papers says, "Socrates was Genesee 'wee' to Socrates."

Thus, Francis Herrakon did de-mark" due to par said. Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez has the numbers to hear an impeachment rap by "two-thirds of public trust."

Her words only seven "say" were from 33 ancient Judges. Ozone pronounces on the other hand, from central 116 must to mimic on impeachment who has long "forgotten her office's raison d'être," as columnist Raul Pangalangan aptly notes.

Pre-dictated Marcos had figures of his ripped abs memorized. Not so for his 2003 impeachment trial, Joseph Estrada fought to no, but "a sure thing."

Reminders the "Graven Hewn?" They were senators who scrambled to get Estrada off the impeachment hook. The group included then Pimier Ricto, Tiamzon Sotto III, Gregorio Honasan, Marian Cedeñosa Santiago, Robert Jaworski and Ramon Revilla.

Three would-be-for-the-trial, party line flames surfaced. "More will decide changes along parties," proclaimed Juan Ponce Enrile. "The old traditionalist has the numbers," Senators Aldie Cayetano and Santiago added.

Eleven jurors-to-stand, on Jan. 11, the "second avantgpe," to bail evidence against Trap, prosecutors, "Cannot be lopped off." Appointed to succeed on the Senate floor to substitute the 11-to-10 vote. Senators Nikki Coseteng and Francisco Tatad crowed "victory."

Minutes after the 11 rushed the second envelope, new messages exploded: "Tie. U. Eden Never lose."

Filipinos "provided the first real test of real messaging," Howard Rheingold writes in "Smart Mobs: The New Social Revolution."

Reople Power II was never in anybody's socracies in the viral networked drama of Estrada's "ill gotten-riches of Ayalaphen, Intergrated, Inc Kitsons, computers — or tablet." Few foresaw "the surge of pressure."

Four days later, senators cheered when a crazed Estrada mumbled, "I do not resign as a lawyer that will preserve the veneration of estate and safety in our civil society ... I leave Malacañang to begin the healing process."

"Is there anything in our history comparable to a people's revolt that left 11 Senate Impeachment judges resisting to the ordeal?" the Cebu Daily News asked. "The worst jinx used as a shield," columnist Sen. John Osmeña told dpA.

Truth, however, has an unpredictable uniformity to break out of custody. The last thing Estrada expected was that his enemy friends-for-now Gen. Luis "Chavit" Singson, would testify on personally huffing-n-Huffenduffing P400 million in jueteng payoffs. Singson's uncharacteristic candor surfaced after he escaped a botched ambush.

Mindanao didn't foresee that Speaker Manny Villar would piggyback on the House opening phase's impeachment articles that were dubbed into the Senate. Rather Chateau Swamps blind sided Trap with her testimony on "four Orlando" bank matters.

Impeachment "should be a unique exercise on governance. People grabbed meals before TV screens. They watched debates now tasks in sequence. Many based comments on newspaper reports. This morning ex-dusk media "sentinal" studied Filipinos as we instinctive interact with lawyers, judges, ordinary but keen citizens, politics and grab to the highest offers of the land. That's modernism.

People were changed, as values centered the local cosmos. "Consciousness-in" is how Catholic "liberation theologians" call this retooling of a people humbafied by unjust social structures on their vigils. Citizens learn to demand accountability.

"Forethought we may have," Hopolito Bonagua-to blamed. "But not hindsight."

That unction resounds as Filipinos face the prospect of an impeachment trial of Gutierrez.

The House will rain through, by a lately margin," I warn. "Or we might be self-impeachment-Corderos, meanwhile, did 'not' mark, 'I vote the Senate," said the lady. But the unexpected can take the best laid plans of mice and men.

The total ban a half plates from the P1.3 bil. Just Mega-Pacific conspiracy scandal, the Kingly Philip Penalty stands to shoe IT'S broadband scam, not to mention the controversial piso bargain agreement with Carlos Garcia.

Where will time forthcoming rascind on government control time? They should try Dini in Macapagal-Arroyo and the first gentleman Mike Arroyo, long said. "Government must first go after the brains behind these scandalous. The confederate must just wait."

Will Gutierrez be the Carthage Thomas "Hercules" the served thing Enrile will shortly. Whitey had much power. He was called "the other king." But he another get-a-thrown that would allow the king to marry Anne Boleyn.

Stripped of power, Whitey said on his deathbed. "Had I but served God with half the zeal I served my king, He would not, in this my age, have left me naked to my enemies."

• • •

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And still, impeach her

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiroz

"THERE'S ONE alternative open to the ambushed," says Teodoro Benigno III. Senate blue ribbon committee chair. "That is to resign. He appeal to the Muslim Brotherhood, please spare the country this conflict for the sake of your eye and mine."

Ricky Carandang agrees. "That is really the choice of the ombudsman. But if she would resign, it would spare the nation the tension and pain of having to go through a painful impeachment process." He hoped that Richard Nixon did that in 1974 "precisely to avoid dragging the country in a very contentious impeachment process."

Well, fans call Carandang's television is Nixon is ombudsman. At the very least that is so because Nixon's presidency with Carpio is a mere embodiment. Most at least by comparison because there's nothing more about it in absolute terms. The Office of the Ombudsman is one of the most powerful positions in this country. Comparing Nixon and Gutierrez is comparing apples and melonballs.

At the very most that it so because the reasons for resigning are different. Gutierrez is charged with condoning corruption, allowing corruption, and blocking every effort to stop corruption. "I did nothing wrong," she says, justifying her refusal to go. Unless she did nothing right, which her position had led her do. Which in the end is saying she did everything wrong. Hit the charges against her begin and end with corruption.

Nixon was accused of quite another type of corruption. What made the US Congress impeach him was Watergate, which was the break-in into Democratic headquarters by spooks, an operation apparently carried out for higher ups in government. The idea was to spin away incriminating documents, possibly illegal contributions to Nixon's campaigns in the past, which might have tossed his chances of reelection in 1972.

The real question is not between Nixon and Gutierrez, it is between Nixon and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The US Congress impeached Nixon merely for trying to cover up the break in, the Philippines Congress refused to impeach GMA for adding up a Concrete commissioner's face with the wrongdoing. The first considered the break-in a crime, the second considered the phone-tap "lapse of judgment."

It's GMA we ought to have forced to resign then, or impeached. Even now, it's she we ought to be asking to resign, her position in Congress being a form of the "poisoned tree," which is ruling for six years illegitimately in mind, even now, it's her we ought to be asking to resign for superseding the security guards, getting senior non-meanings to take

Why should Gutierrez's impeachment plunge the country into needless conflict? Why should Gutierrez's impeachment drag the country through a painful process? I guess it would produce a conflict. Gutierrez and her former boss are not likely to give up without a fight. The paid hacks should have a field day reading distortions and misfirmation. I guess the process can be painful for those it intends to collect. Those who control the GMA administration in whatever is in part, some of whom have screamed their way into the new administration, have reason to worry from Hacienda Luisita.

But why should Gutierrez's impeachment be "traumatic for the country itself? Why should it be painful for the people themselves? The long struggle to impeach, in truth, is not the best thing that happened to us, not least in its emotionally toxic effect. It's the most popular television/radio thing in that I, which above should dispel any association of pain with it. It may also the most educational thing in the world for us. In the very least it gave the mass to see what a vicious thing corruption is, and why their misery was tied up with it. In the very most, it gave the mass to see what a dispirit thing the law is when it serves its real purpose, which is to champion justice and not thwart it.

More than ever, that is what this government needs if it is to succeed in pushing its agenda of fighting corruption, if it is to make it harder try of "big walking corrupt, walking walking" into cloth from the mouth of the cave. It needs the people behind it. Government more cannot stop corruption, and it needed for a huge mandate for any government, including a reasonably honest one such as this one, to imagine it can.

The reason other governments, particularly in the developed countries, seem able to do so on their own is that public support is a given. Public support is corruption is given. Public anger at the outrage is given. Public demand to jail the thieves is given. Public support is there, as palpable as the law is dented have to be drawn out, it doesn't have to be incited. There are countries where "suspicion" "incite" a riot on whatever concept, where the use of it for purposes other than to build roads and bridges and deliver basic services is unconscionable. These are countries where the culture accidentally thrums on elevating it serious pouch into the common inconvenient routine.

We are not those countries. Here, in lieu of disgust, anger and a demand to jail the thieves, what we have is "pero pareho ang eh," "mag bing sabihan nila' lois," "let's move on." Look at how Marcos and Ping have rehabilitated themselves. We don't look out, Gloria will do the same thing. It's the people most of all who ought to be brought in again and again behind any move to sweep out corruption. It's the people most of all who ought to be educated again and again on the monstrosity that is corruption. It's the people least of all whose anger and disgust and demand for justice become a constant, a wall of water burning in upon and swallowing the ungodly.

That connection with Gutierrez struggling. That can happen with Gutierrez being brought to the dock.

Still, impeach her.

Japan's tsunami and our economy

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

MORE THE world's third largest economy suffers a natural disaster of the magnitude of last week's earthquake and tsunami in Japan, it is inevitable that its economic impacts will permeate through the world's economies. While the full extent of the devastation and the damage have yet to be known, analysts are beginning to assess the likely impacts of the tragedy on the Japanese economy and on the rest of the world economy in turn. One would expect that the effects on the Philippines would be significant. Japan, after all, occupies a dominant position in the whole range of our external economic relations, from trade to investments, to tourism and foreign assistance.

Last year Japan was the single biggest buyer of our exports, accounting for 16.2 percent of all our exports, valued at $8.2 billion. Japanese tourists are the biggest source of foreign tourist arrivals in our country, at 1,272 persons. Japan is also second only among the top three sources of foreign direct investments (FDI) in our country. Over a million Filipinos are estimated to be working and residing in Japan, comprising both overseas contract workers and permanent residents. And Japan has traditionally been the largest source of official development assistance (ODA) we receive from abroad. With our economy's close linkage to that of Japan, their primary source of growth, the impact is bound to be significant.

In how will the disaster affect the Japanese economy, and with it, economies closely dependent on it like the Philippines? Any analysis would have to be tentative at this stage, and the earliest assessments have come from sources ranging from the wildly optimistic to the dire. There is no disagreement about the disaster's serious short-term impacts, particularly the loss of possibly tens of thousands of human lives, untold property damage and economic disruptions. Some 4 million households, the US economy said to have produced the 2008 global financial crisis, believes that the earthquake and tsunami are "the worst thing that can happen to Japan in the worst time." With a government budget deficit already standing at around 70 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), the Japanese government will be forced into massive spending to repair the damage, both physical and economic. This would take not just billions but trillions of yen, and would also put into serious question the Japanese government's pledge to write off as much as the huge imbalances in government finances that would result. But such massive spending would actually perk up their economy after contending in recent years with deflation and stagnation, as productive idle capital is put to use to repair and replace damaged infrastructure, and productive idle labor is employed in the reconstruction now.

What are the real-term implications for the Philippine economy? The short-term slowdown in Japanese economic activity that is sure to follow is—might be expected to translate directly into a slowdown in demand for our exports, and our multiple layoffs in some cases, for Filipino workers in the sectors. Similar slowdown or contraction in the economies of other countries that are also major trading partners of Japan, such as the US, would have a further slowdown in jobs for Filipino service sector workers, including in entertainment. For exports to Japan of raw materials and merchandise components that have been shipped to Japan for assembly there and then shipped back out, the overall impact of a drastic slowdown in the Japanese economy will come as a downturn in FDI coming from their direction. And with heightened pressures on the Japan government's finances, it is also logical to expect a significant impact on Japanese ODA in general.

In the case of the world economy going to be negatively affected by Japan's difficulties, there is bound to be second-round effects on us in turn. The global effects are likely to be mixed. Already, the Japanese yen has begun to appreciate, which is bound to enhance on large-scale many of funds sent from abroad to help fund repairs and reconstruction. This sets on an impact on that prices to be among the most immediate effects, as Japan is also the third largest oil consuming country worldwide. With a backlog of its nuclear power plants placed out of commission by the earthquake, Japan is expected to take its purchases of energy-gas for its gas-powered power plants to take up the slack. This would put upward pressure on natural gas prices. On the other hand, reduced demand for petroleum due to the slower economic slowdown in industrial production would have the opposite effect on oil prices. The latter would be a welcome counterfloor for recent upward movements in oil prices due to the spreading turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa.

But Japan's loss could be other industrialized countries' gain, especially in take up any possible slack in industrial production. South Korea, China and India would readily fill in any production gaps in Japan now hampered by the disaster. But as indicated above, these are likely to be momentary setbacks. Thus, providing more evidence to the contrary, there appears to be little scope for any stimulus beyond the short-term for the world economy as a result of the Japanese disaster.

As for our own prospects in 2011, the biggest threats remain a possible double-dip recession in the West (especially Europe), oil price hikes due to political unrest in the Middle East, rising interest rates in response to inflationary pressures, and the upcoming presidential polls. But the impact of Japan's turmoil, we are likely to see some ripples. Let us fervently hope that after the tsunami, we there will hardly be darkening.

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A compounded tragedy

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

FROM THINKING, most people's attention was directed toward Japan with news of the terrible earthquake that struck the northeastern coast and triggered massive tsunamis that devastated towns and cities along the coastline.

For a brief while, attention was taken away from our own Pacific coastline as tsunami warnings were raised from 32 to south as Batanes and Batanes in the north as far south as central Mindanao. Thankfully, the worst of the tsunami that struck parts of the eastern coastline, while higher than usual, did not result in much damage as had been feared. Thankfully, "as soon as reports of the death toll of water rampaging across the Japanese coastline dimmed, the power of a tsunami is sometimes reduced."

To compound the tragedy of the earthquake and tsunami are new concerns about the possible meltdown of nuclear reactors in the affected areas. As if the death toll from the flood and reports estimated to be above 10,000, was not bad enough, many more thousands of lives are in peril from the radiation leaks from the nuclear power plant complexes, once again it is the country to have experienced atomic bomb blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to bid to those explosions have resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands, and to be the deaths, if ever, from the fallout from the damaged power plants.

In this panic, as an old survivor pointed out: "Only one thing is missing: the sound of enemy drone and fear, to the horror and the fear, to the grieving that has gripped the nation, to the knowledge that the country has been. All we can do is to remember the dead and show our compassion and concern for all the survivors, and hope the Japanese nation rises from this most terrible of tragedies in peoples.

* * *

ALL SEEMS to have settled well in the brief duet-up between the Taiwanese and Philippine governments over the deportation of a group of swindlers, some of them Taiwanese, to Mainland China.

Recall that the Taiwanese government protested vigorously over this act of the Philippines, demanding an apology from President Aquino for the deportation of the Taiwanese despite representations of their representatives at the time to the airport. Sent by the President to accompany the stubbed Taiwanese, the Taiwanese formed vice-presidential candidate and presidential adviser Mar Roxas received a rather chilly welcome, believed to obtain in Taiwanese officials' minds the blame on the complications of the affair on Taiwan-Philippines relations.

But now Roxas is back in Taipei, and Minister Peter K. Chumpon of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, no less than the representative of the final stages of negotiating a way to "normalize" relations between the island-country and the Philippines.

Underlying in this diplomatic row is not just the particularly amicable relations between the two countries but about 90,000 Filipino workers who either what could be the highest wages in the region (and to migrant workers at that) in Taiwan (OFWs), Chang Gung City, a Chinese-Philippine businessman (he is president and chairman of the Chinese General Hospital, among others), that impelled him to get involved in the recovering dispute.

* * *

TI PEICAI, once more, Taiwan threatened to deport hundreds of OFWs and refused to grant new visas to Filipino workers if the government refuses to apologize for the deportation. In addition, OFWs in Taiwan and not-citizens agencies here began to pressure the government, hostages-or-one jobs.

Using his connection with Taiwanese officials, among them his good friends, Dy managed to convince them to settle. Taiwan has since lifted the suspension of issuance of thousands of workers and has started to process the applications of some 1,000 Filipino waiting to work there.

But Dy was not alone in exploiting back-channels to cross down the heated relations between Taiwan and the Philippines. Shortly after the crisis broke out, Dy was on hand for his office, former President Fidel V. Ramos, who has extensive contacts in Taiwan due to the respect the Taiwanese hold for him and his former position as chairman of "political" and has informed ties with influential Taiwanese.

We are now seeing the fruits of these informal contacts that led to speedy improvements in our relationship with Taiwan. But having saved it from the brink, perhaps Dy can now help in the more delicate and unrecognizable to my diplomats and officials.

* * *

SOON ARE still available for the next Batanes "primary suburbs" and other sentimental he noted photographer Randy Santacruz.

Participants can still be accommodated for April 9-13 and 19-24, and for May 6-8 and 13-16. The two-night Batanes adventure includes all accommodations and meals and workshops on portraiture, fashion, architectural and nature-scape photography, all set against the magnificent backdrop of Batanes' rolling hills.

At the last Batanes photo safari, aside from raising to the rights and learning new photographic techniques, participants also took part in community activities, including a volleyball tournament between Ivana and Mahatao, and a children's book.

"Imagine," a prize-winning story by Sylvia Mangio about seafarers, to grade schoolers at the Sabtang Elementary School. She was joined by Batanes Governor Vicente Gato and Vice Governor Antonia Pandilo in the event, which was the first part of the tour. The Read-Aloud program is part of Newsstore's immersion program with Batanes children on every trip. With the trip and the Reading Program, Philippine Graphic and Books Across the Seas (the two participants) give away books to both the children and school libraries.

For more information and to book, check out the "photo safaris" link at http://newsstore.multiply.com/journal/item/1 or email newsstore@newsstore.com or call 899-4161.

Gringo vs JimPa, and the sense of exceptionalism

Newsstand

John Nery

ALMOST THREE weeks ago, Sen. Gringo Honasan and Senator Jim Pimentel called media to a briefing session. This doesn't sound like much, but in fact this is the first time that the two senators—normally ambitious and ambitious and were reported in news) and consequential (a raised substantial questions, for instance about the nature of Honasan's resignation and public disappearance in the aftermath of the Oakwood mutiny in 2003) have met in public. It is also the first time the legacy of Edsa 1986 remains very much a work in progress.

In a nine videos the statement has outlined in the briefing, Honasan argued the desire of reflation from its earthquake-wrecked election reasons, or to the declaration of impeachment a few Senate and the puzzling inability of any political system to demand accountability from the Arroyo administration. Pimentel argued the moral ambiguities of Edsa 1986, including the pardon of Libya's rebels and the closing of the popular uprisings in the Middle East, marking a 25-year-old Edsa—some like a missed opportunity. I would like to add another observation: Senator Honasan's narrative during the exchange that as to why our Edsa-restored democracy remains dysfunctional.

The occasion was a Newsstand-sponsored "summit"—an online conference conducted through Twitter and the use of its new tweet, 140-character messages—held on Feb. 23, on the 25th anniversary of Edsa. Things got really interesting when Honasan, who was in Washington, D.C., to "do" caught the spirit of the Edsa revolution in its free-wheeling, walk-into-it freedom, one of the newsstand's questions. It asks using "El Presidente's move to shut down GMA Network Inc. and other media outlets critical [sic] regarding are as found in the leg of removal rekindled those days?

In the space of about five minutes, Honasan answered the question in three tweets:

#newsstandph Major players in EDSA came for various reasons. Gringo, Enrile, ESM had an agenda different from the millions who were there.

#newsstandph They [sic] EDSA as save their senate against Marcos. Often it was safe agents, they furnished their troops.

#newsstandph There were the people in uprisings. They were plain users without the agenda. They [sic] were there to protect their [sic] rights to speak. Honasan's tweets indicated by intense media deadline, and omitted in only 140 characters) upended the main soldier-citizen role ascribed to the Edsa crowds. Honasan's words on the out there to be his day "knows nothing."

Honasan's second prediction was an appeal to the political arena. He explained Thursday to television station 5tec, even asking the Senate-blind face used by comedians, that the Senate is the right venue for investigating. In other words, he was arguing here the element of the political class, which Honasan used to garner the system. Honasan's presidential career did not only spend the entire afternoon (about 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) in the company of congressmen from and contact.

* * *

As it happens, the Newsstand summit on Edsa was not the first time the paths of Honasan and Pimentel crossed. On Nov. 17, 1989, about six weeks before the Bohrin the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff, Honasan according to their original timetable, Honasan were to reach the first of the million protest supporters of the 5pm Making Enmity.

Honasan was called to the headquarters in the Iwo-time TV documentary, "Edsa III."

"Honasan, nasaan ka [at what area are you]?" asks Apo Sisenyor. [Iwo nasa ... Aurora sa Loma sa ilalim ng Bayan Ko," sagot ni Honasan [I am in Aurora in the Loma in the Bayan Ko]. "Honasan, ang kailangan ko ay ang mga tao sa Edsa," sabi niya. [Honasan, what I need are the people in Edsa] "Sir, Aurora ang nangyayari sa Cory" [Sir, Aurora, what is happening to Cory]. "Wala kang pakialam doon [You have no concern there]," sagot ni Honasan. "Ang kailangan ko ay ang mga tao sa Edsa" [What I need are the people in Edsa]. "Sir, Aurora ang nangyayari sa Cory" [Sir, Aurora, what is happening to Cory]. "Wala kang pakialam doon [You have no concern there]," sagot ni Honasan. "Ang kailangan ko ay ang mga tao sa Edsa" [What I need are the people in Edsa].

Of course, I never attended a summit of the Apo. Of course, I never heard of Honasan's calling "Bayan Ko"). ... They kept singing "Bayan Ko." I was getting more frantic, and my wife was screaming ... She said, "What is happening to me?" I said, "I have to get to Aurora." I told them the time to attack Malacañang to near." You know, I was excited. Excited and afraid, and so full of hope—because we had something to offer.

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Payday

IT'S THE last day of the month. Many people look forward to this day because that is when they get paid for the job that they do. Others, including me, dread its coming. I am not very enthusiastic about the coming of this day precisely because it is payday. The end of the month sets more than my bills due I have to pay.

After my Christmas shopping and how that's all, buying my hand aches when I look at the number of zeros that I have to pay. Don't get me wrong, I do love giving presents to those I love during the holidays because I really enjoyed doing it. What I don't like is the ordeal of having to pay for it.

But I'm not complaining about paying. It's the paying that gives me pain in my head, my heart and my pocket.

After work, I immediately headed for the nearest mall, found the nearest automated teller machine and waited for my turn. I expected a lot of people to be waiting in line since it was payday but there were only a few. My turn arrived. I waited for a couple of minutes, thinking one of my nine budgeting to my cell phone's calculator the money that I furnished or which others I found out that there would be very little left of my pay for me. I was afraid I couldn't make it till the next payday. Said the thought that I still had to send some money home. I was getting ready to help but think that I was bringing money while working to live.

When I had withdrawn the money, I went to the nearest restaurant office. So I supposed, it was as crowded as the SM mentions. There was a long line of people, some of whom were also looking happy, especially the kids. There were only two counter people to attend to the clients, either they had the grace to give money or they had the blessing to receive it.

I was a bit worried because I was pending home a modest amount this time. It was all I could afford to send.

So I waited for my turn. When it was my turn, I received a woman who arrived ahead of me. It was past 7 in the evening but she looked as if she just came from the shower. I heard her ask the guard for the form for money sending money.

I got a moment as she filled the form, thought she was taking me long doing it. I was waiting for her to finish so that I would use the pen. She excitedly answered every question on the form as if she was writing an essay. When she was done, she looked at me with a smile.

I grabbed the pen in a manner and filled my own form. I was about to give the form with my money to the teller when I saw the woman again. This time she was happily sending as she teller as she carefully folded the cash. Wide bills that she received. She placed the money inside her small purse and then she was gone.

In a few minutes I left and—not for the second time for myself. But looked happier than me because she was engaged with what she got.

Nowadays, giving is a rare pastime. I almost imagine my mom beaming with happiness as she claims the money that I send home. I know that any amount from me pays a smile on her face.

I think I have to change my mind set. I need to start appreciating the blessings that I am enjoying. I have a loving and supportive family that surrounded by good friends. My jobs rewarding. I am young and healthy. But sometimes, forget to count these and I am only focused on what I don't have. How much I am earning or what I want to buy. I beat myself buying materials things and my capacity to do so seems to be proving to importance to me.

When it was my turn to be served by the teller, I forced myself to smile. I wanted to look how to be as contented as the woman. Then, I felt how a long list of bills to pay. Too much. God I am holding a job in a country where millions are jobless. Although, I am not as sure if I can make it to the next payday, there is a reason I can look forward to.

I intended to see that woman and her contended smile for me to remember those things. I found her.

Mary Shell Flores, 22, works in Davao City.

Payslip

Marc Anthony M. Peralta

NOBODY THEY work in the private or public sector, employees have one most anticipated days in every month. Those very days determine the mettles of the other days. Yes, they are that powerful: the fibers and wills of those other days greatly depend on the figures written on their payslips. Those figures tell the places an employee could go to, and what he would see, see and feel.

Those figures are there for a purpose. They measure employee's worth in the company. One payslip can take us to a lounge, while another would be good enough for a diner.

They govern despite to determine the number employees have. The hours may be the same, the duties similar, but employee or the dozen payslip can help me decide what brand of the will have.

It is like an invisible force commanding the coincidences of man. One wishes to do this, he thinks, or have something in one particular time, we, one chooses not to, not because of want, but due to the power of the small pieces of paper. And as the master is commanded, its executions made easier by the bigger numbers printed. If only the figures will be different, perhaps things will also be different.

I suppose it is the natural order of things. If everyone can afford to live a car, traffic will see more accidents. Yes, we need orders, we need prices, we need [—paydays].

I do not mean to say that I am against the good values. I know what I have to given, what food to eat, and what things to buy. There may be less but they may not be more than what I can afford with my pay. It is the order to which I belong. I accept it, and live with it—until some realizations for both.

The figures on the payslip are riddled with deductions—withholding tax, SSS, Medicare, etc. The figures are undeniable: they add up to a big chunk of my salary. It stings and it stinks. It is like drowning in unsalted cash. It hurts, but the government seems not to care.

The figures on the payslip are not pleasing. Corruption is a minimum—in one's choices. Instead of roads, seeks for life. Instead of Europe, try Singapore. Instead a BMW, go for a Toyota. Don't discuss because limited because of some corrupt officials officers or lawmakers or high government officials. They ought to be thankful to it. In my mind, they say, and my European my time, they and there family are enjoying. And yes, that Birthy's and tights belong more.

Look at the figures.

Marc Anthony M. Peralta, 27, works in a government agency.

Multicolored abomination

LETTERS

WE HOPE been seeing that new abomination slowly spreading throughout the streets of Manila the past year or two, especially along the streets of Ermita and Malate, and along Roxas Boulevard all the way to Vito Cruz and eventually it is now in full bloom.

I am referring to the monstrosity of multicolored street lamps sprouting and appearing along all the numerous thoroughfares.

Once we were happy to see a few quaint, Spanish-style street lamps, most in line with our most regal pair, its unique version of Torrijos, Roxas Bridges, Intramuros and even Binondo, but these are now being replaced by an invading swarm of atrocious, alien-looking (as in from Mars)...modern-steel—bold shades of red, blue, white combinations, or red and white—light poles with huge bluish-shaped lamps on top which can be considered bulb of giant underwater, all looking like stage props from either "E.T." or the "Aliens" trilogy.

We see these lamps lining Sagunian Bridge, Jones Bridge and both sides of Roxas Boulevard. I have seen old Manila-style street lamps still looking very nice and new, having only been to be replaced by these monstrous-looking Lone Gunmen fiction, featuring St. Sebastian's Gallows.

Something truly perplexing is going on.

Why do we, make no saving the few, nice street lamps left (that can be appreciated as one

classics, flesh and silhouettes shiny around in this for- mer beautiful and well-loved city? Are we, the world, ready and ready-lash, cross-looking "modern" street lamps? Do we merely accept everything that City Hall throws our way, in its efforts to finally eliminate anything that can bring back the classic and elegance of our beloved Manila? Can we not open our eyes to the beauty of such common things as lamp posts? Can we not learn to please like Ermita, Intramuros and Binondo districts—in countries that have some kinship with us—they try to maintain, as best as possible, that touch of our common Hispanic heritage, even if only in such small and simple details? Can we not save our beauty of such common things as lamp proper street lamps installed in our streets, instead of these banal contraptions which have nothing to do with Manila's illustrious heritage? Who can City Hall ask for the leader in making Manila as lovely as it once was, instead of being the laughing stock?

It is very sad indeed to see how our once "Pearls and Ever-loved City" is being turned into an inconsolable eyesore.

—LOLITA MA. GUERRERO III,
Ermita
Manille lark, Intramuros City

Grandma's wish inspired by Youngblood piece

THIS IS to thank young joiner Philip A. Reinoso for his beautiful and sensitive contribution to Youngblood. ("Grandma is home," Inquirer, 3/8/11)

It is seldom and very rare that a grandson writes something about his grandmother, especially about one who is already ill and near departure. The account of the events in his grandma's life is written with sensitivity and gives the reader a vivid description of the painful issues of loved ones the suffered during her illnesses. Philip writes with compassion and love, as rare with today's youth. Would that one of my 33 grandchildren would also write about me when I no longer am. Grandma Philip's grandma, I am already 90 anyway, but still very much "alive and kicking."

Philip, I am proud of you!

—ELDA KHOL
elsa.sheen@gmail.com

As party chief, P-Noy must follow LP stand

PRESIDENT AQUINO should not be faulted for espousing the stand of the Liberal Party to impeach Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez. He was chosen by the party to be its standard-bearer. Any student of politics knows that an elected official representing a party must necessarily espouse the policy of the party.

It would be senseless to say that as the President of the Philippines, he must be impartial. The President was elected as a party member; as such, he is expected to pursue the party's objectives.

—E EMMANUEL C. FONTANILLA,
Honour Avenue, Grand Samoa City

GSIS explains non-reimbursement, asks for pensioner's understanding

WE WOULD like to thank the inquirer for bringing to our attention Stella S.J. Villa's request for the Government Service Insurance System to reimburse her medical expenses under Presidential Decree 20, as amended. (Inquirer, 2/15/11)

We understand that Villa previously enjoyed medical reimbursements from the GSIS through the Employees Compensation Insurance Program (ECIP), which is the GSIS administers.

However, because of the Fund's incapacity to support claims and benefits payments, the GSIS has resorted to the following series of priorities (Board Resolution No. 366 dated 2004):

- Administrative expenses equivalent to 10 percent of actual SSS contributions;
- Life insurance premiums (actual), under Office Order No. 47-03 (dated June 16, 2003);
- Monthly pension of SC disability pensioners;
- Monthly pension of survivors, (dependents) who have been receiving pensions for five years or less;
- Claims and benefits, including medical reimbursements to agencies which have no corresponding premium balances;
- Monthly pension of survivorship pensioners who have been receiving pensions for more than five years;
- Advances of the GSIS to SSS; and
- Operating expenses of Occupational Safety and Health Center and Employees Compensation Commission.

The resolution also removed from the above list, the payment of claims and benefits (including medical reimbursements) of pensioners whose agencies have outstanding premium balances. We regret the cancel the discontinuance of Villa's medical reimbursements.

I hope for the understanding of Villa as the GSIS is obliged to preserve this Fund. Even so, the new board is now exploring ways to improve and reduce the benefits and medical expenses of our members and pensioners. In particular, we are reviewing the Hospitalization Support Program (almost wider participation) with more private hospitals across the country and greater discounts for our members, their dependents and old-age pensioners.

—ROBERTO V. VERCELA,
president and general manager
Government Service Insurance System,
Financial Center, Pasay City

Assistant Editor Tony Benipayo

Across the NATION

P-Noy 'open' to holding ARMM polls

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Cynthia Balana and Jeannie Aring

PRESIDENT AQUINO'S support for a postponement of elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) isn't unbreakable, according to legislators opposing the postponement.

Mr. Aquino is believed to have been swayed by advice on the ARMM elections given by his political adviser, Ronald Llamas, a social democrat whose party-list group Akbayan is at the forefront of a bill that would synchronize autonomous elections with the 2013 midterm national elections.

Indian Basilan Rep. Rodolfo C. Salalima said Malacañang was virtually acting (wearing) officials and the people of ARMM into giving in to plans to postpone the elections.

Polls mean no funds

Salalima was reacting to a statement attributed to Local Government Secretary Jesse Robredo's view Malacañang plans to withhold further funding for ARMM unless all previous funds have been accounted for. Salalima said the timing of the Malacañang statement was obviously intended to force ARMM officials and its people to agree to a postponement of the elections.

"To threaten to deprive the ARMM of funding so it will agree to a poll postponement is a brazen attempt at arm-twisting," Salalima said.

"As it is, the ARMM gets a minuscule share of budgetary allocation from the national government. To even take that away is to deprive the people of ARMM of what little support they get from the government," said the congressman.

Davao del Sur Rep. Marc Douglas Cagas IV said Mindanao lawmakers had met with Mr. Aquino and the President did not appear to be completely sold on postponing elections in ARMM.

ARMM people's pulse

Cagas said Mr. Aquino realized that consultations held in ARMM showed "the people were for holding of the elections and there was no valid reason for postponing it."

Amid efforts to postpone the elections, however, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is pushing through with its preparations.

The Comelec, according to its spokesperson James Jimenez, has started an awareness campaign/preparation to source registration in the ARMM from Mar. 21-31.

Jimenez said voters' registration in the ARMM would push through on those days. Registration for voters elsewhere would start April 1 until Oct. 31 next year, the Comelec said.

"We urge [qualified would-be voters] to be on the lookout for Comelec voter education activities in their area," Jimenez said in a statement.

The registration period begins for ARMM amid protests over plans to postpone elections in the region that are scheduled in August.

No guarantee

The National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) reiterated its appeal to Congress not to postpone the Aug. 8 elections because it won't guarantee free elections in ARMM would be free and fair.

"Postponement will go against the basic and internationally accepted principle of regularity of the elections," said the Namfrel in a statement.

"Postponement will deprive the ARMM voters of their right to choose their leaders for a second whole years," the watchdog said.

"Having elections this August will ensure continuity of a functioning local government in the ARMM to avoid disruptions in the delivery of basic services and administration of local governance," it added.

Short-term gains

According to Namfrel, postponing the elections and condemning the ARMM as a "failed state" would yield only short-term gains.

"With the 'gaming' climate prevailing in our electoral process, what is needed is to change the rules of the game and not be participants to the game," the watchdog said.

It said resources or the lack of them were not a constraint in holding the ARMM elections since Comelec has enough savings—about P1.0 billion—to supplement the P600 million appropriated by Congress for the exercise.

"Postponement is not a solution," said Namfrel. "What is more important is the service and close goals to which Comelec would consistently prepare and administer for."

REMEMBERING 2008
Watching the quake and tsunami tragedy unfold in Japan could have brought back to people in Cebu images similar to this one in June 2008 when a water surge sent waves taller than houses slamming into a heavily populated community in Cebu City at the height of Typhoon Frank.

Japan envoy in prequake comment: Jpepa works

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—Japanese ambassador to the Philippines Makoto Katsura said the controversial Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) is working, making Japan the country's biggest investor in 2009 and 2010.

Katsura's comments, however, came days before his country was struck by a Magnitude 8.9 quake and a massive tsunami that devastated northeastern Japan.

Katsura, during a visit here, said a year after the Senate ratified the Jpepa, foreign Direct Investments (FDI) from Japan increased to P73.7 billion or 16.1 percent of the P125.8 billion plowed in to the economy in 2009.

He said Japan stayed at the top of foreign direct investors in 2010 by investing another P68.3 billion or 19.8 percent of the P436 billion poured into the country from January to November last year.

> "That was because of Jpepa. I think many Japanese [businessmen] were waiting [for Jpepa]"

"That was because of Jpepa. I think many Japanese [businessmen] were waiting [for Jpepa]," he said.

The bilateral treaty reduced tariffs and eased trade traffic between the Philippine and Japan, but it sparked protests starting in 2006 because of its impact on overseas labor.

The treaty originally set a quota for nurses and caregivers that Japan could receive from the Philippines each year, but this was stricken off the agreement which led to its ratification.

Katsura said Japan now subscribes a six-month language course for nurses upon entry to familiarize them with Japanese culture and bioscience.

Katsura, who led a Luzon tour of journalists hosted by Japan's Official Development Assistance this week, said Japan is interested in developing areas in Mindanao as potential manufacturing hubs.

"Mindanao is [one] [country's] weakest point today," he told reporters here on Wednesday night.

He said Japan has been investing time and resources in helping real estate in Mindanao.

OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS GUTIERREZ IS INNOCENT

In conducting the impeachment proceedings against the Ombudsman, the House Committee on Justice, impelled by the concurring, albeit unwarranted, desire to remove the Ombudsman from office at any and all costs, acted with malicious and complete haste, jettisoned the fundamental requirements of due process of law, and blatantly determined the existence of probable cause to impeach her on the basis of the two (2) Impeachment Complaints filed by Reps. Kontrekwe-Rasuquel, et al. and Renato Reyes, et al. without affording the Ombudsman reasonable and adequate opportunity to present her evidence before the Committee. But even as the Ombudsman was already deprived of her day before the House Committee on Justice, the political majority was not probable cause in many of the charges filed by the complainants against the Ombudsman. Out of the seven (7) charges leveled in the First Complaint, only three (3) were voted upon and found probable cause to warrant an impeachment trial – this even as the House Committee on Justice solely considered the evidence of the complainants. With respect to the Second Impeachment Complaint, the House Committee on Justice, as in the First Impeachment Complaint, voted that only one (1) impeachable offense was committed by the Ombudsman, i.e., "betrayal of public trust". The Committee found no probable cause that the Ombudsman committed culpable violation of the Constitution.

Had the members of the House Committee on Justice only adhered to the process and procedure mandated in their very own Rules of Procedure in Impeachment Proceedings and allowed the Ombudsman to cross-examine the witnesses of the complainants and to adduce countervailing evidence on her behalf, the Ombudsman would have proven to the Committee and the Filipino people that the charges and accusations against her in the two (2) Impeachment Complaints are false and baseless.

So that the Filipino people, to whom the Ombudsman is accountable, may know the unvarnished truth regarding the charges leveled against the Ombudsman in the two (2) Impeachment Complaints, something that was made impossible due to the expedited, abbreviated and orchestrated impeachment proceedings before the House Committee on Justice, the text of the Answers (Ex-Abundanti Ad Cautelam) submitted by the Ombudsman to the Committee last March 6, 2011 are reproduced herein below:

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

IN RE: IMPEACHMENT OF
OMBUDSMAN MA. MERCEDITAS N. GUTIERREZ ---------- (1) TO (2)

ANSWER
(EX ABUNDANTI AD CAUTELAM to the Second Impeachment Complaint, dated 21 July 2010)

Respondent Ombudsman Ma. Merceditas Navarro-Gutierrez (the "respondent Ombudsman") by counsel, respectfully files her Answer (Ex-Cautela) to the Second Impeachment Complaint, dated 21 July 2010 (the "Second Complaint"), without prejudice to her resolution of the issues raised in her motion for the reconsideration, dated 26 February 2011 filed with the Supreme Court, and upon the following grounds/matter respectfully stated:

1. The Second Complaint failed to allege with specificity the particular charge the latter will have (2) separate and distinct offenses, namely: (a) culpable violation of the Constitution and (b) betrayal of public trust.

   "Culpable violation of the Constitution" means a willful and intentional violation of the Constitution and not violations committed carelessly or inadvertently or a good faith or through an honest mistake of judgment.

   "Betrayal of public trust" on the other hand, is a catch-all phrase which reflects all acts even if not constituting a statute as a penal offense, which would render the officer unfit to continue in office. Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, however, added that, under the specific circumstances, the betrayal of public trust to be a ground for impeachment, the ostensible charges of misconduct must be of the same severity as treason and bribery, offenses that strike at the very heart of the life of the nation.

2. The charges of culpable violation of the Constitution and betrayal of public trust alleged in the Second Complaint relate to the following acts and/or omissions, to wit:

   a. "Betrayal of Public Trust"

      1) The blatant and unconscionable tax evasion case of the Ombudsman from 2006 onwards;

      2) The failure to take prompt and immediate action against former Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, former Sec. Leandro Mendoza, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, with regard to the NBN-ZTE Broadband Project;

      3) The delay in conducting and concluding an investigation on the death of Engr. Philip Andrew Pestaño aboard a Philippine Navy vessel;

      4) The failure to conduct an investigation with regard to the ever increasing threat of Jo Chua or Dejo Kadagasan in New York (3 August 2010).

   b. There can be no "culpable violation of the Constitution" and/or "betrayal of public trust" as charged by complainants Reyes, et al. against respondent Ombudsman. The said acts/omissions alleged in the Second Complaint do not constitute impeachable offenses.

4. Late Complaint Filed from 2006 onwards

   a. Complainant Reyes, et. al. argue that from 2006 onward the commission rate of Lance Y. Gokongwei, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of Cebu Air, Inc. (Cebu Air) has been increasing from 1% to 2% and that the Ombudsman failed to file the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) for the years 2006 and 2007 despite the fact that Cebu Air's commission rate for the years 2006 and 2007 increased from 1% to 2%.

   b. The claim is based on a purported 2009 report by the Transparency and Accountability Network which accused the Commission on Audit (COA) of failing to audit the Ombudsman's SALN for the years 2006 to 2008 and down from 63% for the previous years to a measly 14.47% or merely a quarter of the rate for 2007.

   c. Furthermore, according to the Complaint, the exact months were March, May, and June with 2006 rates at 6%, 3% and 5%, respectively. As of 31 October 2008, the commission rate stood at 7% with 2% accounted as commission out of total fees.

   d. Compared to the rate of other countries, a 7% commission rate (or even 12.5% or 15.45% for "absolutely none" Such dismal performance allegedly amounts to dereliction of duty which reveals the irresponsible acts of the Ombudsman on the ground of "betrayal of public trust".

   e. The allegations of Reyes, et. al. are false, the commission rate of Lance Gokongwei from 1% to 2% is between the Gokongwei-owned Cebu Air and the regular counsel for the year 2006 to 15.45%, higher than the previous years of 2008 and 2007.

   f. "Lance Gokongwei" is separate and distinct from the unfortunate investigation stage, though both were commenced by the Office of the Ombudsman.

      The Final Investigation Office of the Office of the Ombudsman is primarily responsible for the conduct of fact-finding investigations of cases filed before the Office of the Ombudsman. All the early stages, i.e. the fact-finding investigation is done discreetly. Hence, if evidence was gathered to determine whether criminal complaint may be filed with the Office of the Ombudsman. At the early stage, no formal complaint is yet filed since the respondents are not yet named since no identities.

      On the other hand, in preliminary investigation proper, respondents are named and the investigation is made public. The respondents are given the opportunity to present counter-evidence to their defense. After the evidence on both sides are considered, a decision is made whether or not a probable cause is made. If probable cause is found, an information will be filed with the proper court against the respondents. Otherwise, the case against them will be dismissed.

   g. Based on Ombudsman, it was ruled that the fact-finding investigation done by the Ombudsman is not part of preliminary investigation but preparatory to it.

   h. All it ever was only for the sake of argument that there is a decline in commission rate from 2006 onwards, a condition and/or culpable act/s/ omission committed by the Ombudsman is not punishable therefore. It is not the function of the respondent Ombudsman to control and/or regulate.

      Moreover, the question of existence in deciding the matter of a criminal case before the Ombudsman should be different from the question of existence required for the commencement of a civil case or administrative case. In the former, the law requires proof beyond reasonable doubt, while the latter only requires a preponderance of evidence.

      In the commission rate, therefore, cannot be attributed to the respondent Ombudsman, who only determines the existence of probable cause in filing criminal information before the Courts.

   i. Finally, the respondent Ombudsman herself does not possess the criminal cases filed before the Sandiganbayan or the regular courts. The Office of the Special Prosecutor ("OSP") prosecutes these cases before the Sandiganbayan while the cases filed before the Courts. The respondent Ombudsman has no hand in directing as to how the OSP will try the cases before the Courts.

      Thus, absent any allegation that the respondent Ombudsman has committed any culpable act/s/ omission in the prosecution of the cases filed before the Courts, there is no reason to hold the alleged acts/omission tantamount to "betrayal of public trust" which would warrant respondent Ombudsman's impeachment.

      In the same way that a car accident case cannot be blamed on the Secretary of Justice who, like the Ombudsman, investigates and prosecutes criminal cases, the Ombudsman cannot be impeached on that basis.

5. NBN-ZTE Deal

   1) On 5 October 2007, Samuel Ike filed a complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman against former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, Jr. relative to the NBN-ZTE Broadband scandal.

   2) Samuel claims that despite the provisions of Rule 112, Section 3 of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure, which purportedly requires the respondent Ombudsman to take action within ten (10) days from receipt of the complaint, the latter failed to act on the complaint for which he filed a motion to that effect on 30 February 2008, or more than 20 months after Samuel filed the complaint, and only after she called for a public hearing on the NBN-ZTE Broadband scandal.

   3) According to Samuel, during the actual hearings of the case, Manila newspaper items, including Chairman Abalos, were given two (2) days from receipt of the complaints, or up to 09 February 2008, within which to file their respective counter-affidavits. She claims that despite the failure of the respondents to file their counter-affidavits on the said date, the respondent Ombudsman still allowed them to submit their counter-affidavits during the 5 March 2008 hearing. Samuel, as an ordinary citizen, deep resentment on the procedure, particularly the delay in the Ombudsman's action on the complaint, which is why he filed a similar complaint on violation of the Constitution's mandate on public accountability. Actions other than expedience or deliberate excommunication that amounts to "betrayal of public trust" — like, in view of the heightened public scrutiny of the NBN-ZTE scandal and the alleged involvement of high-ranking government officials, the Ombudsman's failure to act promptly on the complaint, the Ombudsman's failure to conduct motu proprio investigation, the Ombudsman's failure to file charges against Mike Arroyo, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo.

   Reasons or basis in Samuel's allegations stated.

   4) First. The duty of the respondent Ombudsman to prosecute cases committed by public officials and employees does not preclude her from conducting an investigation against same. To a less (2) of the respondent Ombudsman's duties is the power to conduct investigations. Indeed, it is a well-settled rule that the Office of the Ombudsman has discretion to determine whether a criminal case, given its merits and circumstances, should be filed or not. The Supreme Court itself recognized this sole discretion of the Ombudsman to determine whether a criminal case should be filed or not against PGMA, et. al/Mike Arroyo. It stated that the discretion of the Ombudsman in prosecuting or dismissing a complaint filed before [her] will not be interfered with absent a clear case of grave abuse of discretion.

   5) Second. There has been no finding of grave abuse of discretion against respondent Ombudsman with respect to her findings of probable cause in connection with (2) cases against Chairman Abalos and Secretary Romulo Neri.

   6) Third. While the complaint of Samuel with regard to the NBN-ZTE deal was received by the Office of the Ombudsman on 05 October 2007, it is not true that the respondent Ombudsman acted on the complaint only on 19 February 2008 or after more than (5) months.

      Following the normal rules of investigation obtained by her predecessors, the Office of the Ombudsman conducted its "case-building" from the time records and complaints are filed before the Office of the Ombudsman Quezon City Office. The following records transpired from the time the complaint was filed with the Office of the Ombudsman on 05 October 2007:

      a. The complaint of Samuel Ike filed on 5 October 2007 was docketed as CPL-C-07-1858;

      b. The complaint was immediately referred to the Fact-Investigation Office for fact-finding investigation on 11 October 2007 for review of the Evaluation Slip dated 11 October 2007;

      c. The Evaluation Report was submitted by the Fact-Investigation Office on 12 December 2007;

      d. The Evaluation Report recommended the consolidation of the complaint together with OMB-C-C-07-0425 (cited OMB-C-07-0397) (Pedilla vs. Abalos, et. al.) and OMB-C-C-07-0426 (OMB-C-07-0398) (Pedilla vs. Abalos, et. al.) for purposes of conducting preliminary investigation and recommended indictment;

      e. On 7 January 2008, the Evaluation Report was endorsed to the Fact-Investigation Office for FIRM;

      f. On 9 January 2008, the endorsement (FIRM) was made to FIRM-C for consolidation with the complaint filed by Daniel Pang-ilog Ike, docketed as OMB-C-C-07-0425 (and OMB-C-C-07-0397);

      g. The case was docketed as OMB-C-C-08-0035 (Pedilla vs. Abalos, et. al.) – Assault by public/ivory investigation and administrative adjudication;

      h. On 19 February 2008, the first public hearing on the case-consolidated cases was held.

   7) From the foregoing, it is clear that the allegation that "the Ombudsman took cognizance of the case only on 19 February 2008" is false. It is also clear that the date of Samuel and the Office of the Ombudsman is not due to and as the complaint called for (15) days from receipt thereof to take action and thus without basis.

   8) Fourth. The respondent Ombudsman did not participate in the case. Therefore, Atty. Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, who is the husband of Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and her husband, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, on the ground that there is no evidence directly or indirectly linking him to the NBN-ZTE Deal was presented. Atty. Arroyo was not involved in the NBN-ZTE deal and, therefore, according to the Special Prosecutor, cannot be given any verified duty weight.

   9) And these reasons, there is absolutely no basis in charging that the respondent Ombudsman failed to take action on the complaints against the immediate relative, against then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and/or her husband, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, with regard to the NBN-ZTE Broadband project.

6. The Alleged Delay in Conducting the Investigation on the Death of Engr. Philip Andrew Pestaño Aboard the Navy Vessel

   1) The Second Complaint charges, among others, that the Office of the Ombudsman has caused delay in the investigation of the death on 27 September 1995 of Engr. Philip Andrew Pestaño ("Philip") on board the naval vessel BRP Rajah Humabon. According to the complaint, Philip's death was allegedly due to the effects of the administration of anti-tetanus serum to him on the eve of Philip's recruitment – an investigation up to this present makes the officer of respondent Ombudsman.

   2) To support their Complaint, Samuel cited the findings of the Uniformed Services Human Rights Committee ("USHRC") under the Task Force Delamad Project of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR") which purportedly found that Philip's death was caused or related to alleged anti-tetanus shots administered to him by the Philippine Navy. Samuel also claims that the USHRC is calling for a thorough investigation on the circumstances surrounding the death of Philip, and that the Ombudsman should conduct its own investigation on the circumstances of Philip's death. Samuel concludes that this is a direct indictment against the Office of the Ombudsman which amounts to dereliction of duty on the ten years have, the alleged "betrayal of public trust".

   The above allegations are not true.

   3) To begin with, the records will show that the request sent to the Ombudsman to look into the death of the Philippine Navy Officer was received by the Office of the Ombudsman on 3 December 2009. This is contrary to the following records of the case:

   a. Due to the death of Philip on 27 September 1995, a complaint was filed by the Spouses Pestaño before the Office of the Ombudsman on 26 March 2008. The complaint was entitled "Pestaño and Dolor Pestaño vs. John Doe" and docketed as OMB-MIL-08-0255.

   b. On 2 September 1998, then Office of the Ombudsman – Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices ("MOLEO") came out with an Evaluation Report recommending that the case be closed and terminated without prejudice.

   c. On 7 September 1998, the MOLEO Evaluation Report was endorsed to Ombudsman Aniano A. Desierto for approval.

   d. On 4 March 2003, (5½ of the Project Date of Philip) also recommended that the investigation of the case be closed and terminated, citing the lack of evidence of the Military investigators.

   e. On 7 April 2003, Ombudsman Aniano A. Desierto approved the recommendation to close and terminate the case.

   f. The (5) years thereafter, or on 27 October 2008, and this during the term of Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, another case complaint was filed by the brother and partner (also not) and filed by the Spouses Pestaño (Angelo Andrew Pestaño and Dolor Pestaño) before the MOLEO. The case was entitled "Philip and Dolor Pestaño vs. Col. Ricardo Galvez, (CDR) Reynaldo P. Lopez, AMC, Makati and (LT) Aquino, (CDR) Candiago C. Dasa, Jr., Alfredson Jr., Alex, APO, Sandy Alberto, Lt. Jonathan Cortez, Lt. Ruben Rosas, PO Gerald G. Amoranto and PO2 Edd Lorenzo F. Ignacio," docketed as OMB-P-C-08-0396 (and OMB-P-C-08-0255-J).

   g. On 1 December 2008, herein respondent Ombudsman re-assumed Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo.

   h. On 4 December 2008, just five (5) days after respondent Ombudsman resumed office, the respondent ordered the case (OMB-P-C-08-0396 (and OMB-P-A-08-0255-J) for the first time was received by the Office of the Ombudsman at the then courts-in-chief.

   i. On 27 December 2008, the Courts-in-Affidavits of respondents Aquino, Dasa and Lopez were received by the Office of the Ombudsman. On 2 January and 5 January 2009, the Counter-Affidavits of respondents Alberto and Cortez, respectively, were received by the Office of the Ombudsman.

   j. On 26 January 2009, Spouses Pestaño filed their Joint Reply-Affidavit.

   k. On 29 November 2009, the Orders (1) cases (i.e. OMB-MIL-08-0255, OMB-P-C-08-0396 (and OMB-P-A-08-0255-J) were consolidated and they be treated the same fields and issues.

   l. On 10 June 2010, the Office of the Ombudsman, acting on the existing records, dismissed the case for lack of evidence. The Resolution, dated 10 June 2010, dismissing the case against the respondents was signed by Graduate III Tony Lucas Bautista and approved by Prosecutor Officer I, Edgar E. Casilla, (OIC-Director) Evelyn H. Constantino, (Deputy Ombudsman for the Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices) and Orlando C. Casimiro (Overall Deputy Ombudsman). Respondent Ombudsman took no part in the issuance of the Resolution dated 10 June 2010.

7. From the foregoing records, it is clear that respondent Ombudsman had no hand in the alleged "prolonged investigation" of the case. Philip died on 27 September 1995, but was only on 10 March the case (i.e., OMB-MIL-08-0255) was filed with then Office of the Ombudsman. The case Complaint-Affidavit charging seven senior naval officers (Col. Galvez, Col. OMB-P-C-08-0396 (and OMB-P-A-08-0255-J) was filed only on 27 October 2008. It took the Office of the Ombudsman (5) years to dismiss the case. From the time of Philip's death in 1995 or from the filing of the first complaint as of the filing of the second case Complaint-Affidavit in 2008, ten (10) years had already lapsed and it was only in December 2008 that respondent Ombudsman re-assumed office.

   Moreover, the period of five (5) years from the time respondent Ombudsman assumed her office until the Office of the Ombudsman issued the Resolution, dated 10 June 2010, was reasonable in light of Ombudsman's heavy caseload. Besides, the issuance of an order to the defendant dismissing the investigation was a little due to the lapse of time and not wanting of evidence.

8. And that is not all. Spouses Pestaño cannot now delay for their themselves contributed to the delay by filing a total of nineteen (19) motions / requests for extensions of time from 21 September 2007 to 23 February 2009 to file their position papers – this for reasons of "unanticipated heavy work changes work and work appointments" or other cases there.

9. On the other hand, to accuse of Admirals, like Office of the Ombudsman was not to be given their similar inability of the respondents, which surprisingly was the case in response to those filed by the Spouses Pestaño.

10. Indeed, by the sheer number of motions for extension of time to file position paper filed by the respondents, it is clear that the Office of the Ombudsman was not remiss in the exercise of its duties. It is granted, and not grudgingly, to refuse or disallow any delay to the resolution of the case in response to the Ombudsman, who do not even take part in issuing the Resolution dismissing the case.

SPECIAL AND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

Grave or Special and Affirmative Defenses, respondent Ombudsman represents:

1. The foregoing allegations are repleaded herein by reference.

2. Complainant Reyes, et. al. have no cause of action or to impeach respondent Ombudsman on their:

   a. The acts and/or omissions alleged as constitutive of culpable violation of the Constitution and betrayal of public trust cannot be deemed of the same nature and severity as the other grounds and/or bases therein under the Constitution that entitle either any removal of the Office holders.

   b. By law and settled jurisprudence, respondent Ombudsman has the discretion to determine whether a criminal case, given its facts and circumstances, should or should not be filed.

   c. The duty of a government prosecutor to prosecute crimes does not preclude him from refusing to file an information when he believes that there is no prima facie evidence to do so.

   d. Although the Ombudsman has the duty to and promptly act on complaints brought before her, she has the discretion to determine whether a complaint should be dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence, and that any investigation into the alleged commission of the crime is premature.

   e. The Ombudsman has the duty to act promptly on complaints brought before her, but she has the discretion to determine whether a complaint should be dismissed for lack of sufficient evidence, and that any investigation into the alleged commission of the crime is premature.

3. The Ombudsman's complaint charges substitute offenses or violation of Section 13, Rule 117 of the 2000 Rules of Criminal Procedure which provides that a complaint must charge only one (1) offense.

4. Respondent Ombudsman has regularly performed her official functions, duties and responsibilities in accordance with good faith, usage, the Constitution and the laws.

5. Complainants Reyes, et.al. and Red Ken Reti Impeachment Complaint, dated 21 July 2010 no grave and evident bad faith in that its allegations are based entirely on mere hearsay, speculation and on baseless media reports, and are even unsupported by documentary evidence, especially those that are purportedly sworn statements of persons not legal heirs and hearsay, expenses, messages, and are even unsupported Ombudsman who resigning from her position.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, there was no no "culpable violation of the Constitution" and/or "betrayal of public trust" as charged by complainants Reyes, et al. against respondent Ombudsman. As shown, the acts and/or omissions alleged in the Second Complaint are unfrivolous, speculative and without factual and legal basis. Thus, the Second Complaint must be dismissed.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, premises considered, it is respectfully prayed that the Honorable Committee dismiss the Second Complaint forthwith.

Other relief just and equitable under the premises are likewise prayed for.

Pasay City, 6 March 2011.

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By:

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Roll No. 36794

Lenten Notary Public for Quezon City until December 31, 2011
Appointment No. 10-11-1-2011 (Notarial Commission)
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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE

IN RE: IMPEACHMENT OF
OMBUDSMAN MA. MERCEDITAS N. GUTIERREZ ---------- (1) TO (2)

ANSWER
(EX ABUNDANTI AD CAUTELAM to the Second Impeachment Complaint, dated 21 August 2010)

Respondent Ombudsman Ma. Merceditas Navarro-Gutierrez (the "respondent Ombudsman") by counsel, respectfully files her Answer (Ex-Cautela) to the Second Impeachment Complaint, dated 21 August 2010 filed by Reps. Kontrekwe-Rasuquel, et al. and Renato Reyes, et al. (the "Second Complaint"), without prejudice to her resolution of the issues raised in her motion for the reconsideration, dated 26 February 2011 filed with the Supreme Court, and upon the following grounds/matter respectfully stated:

1. The Second Complaint failed to allege with specificity the particular charge the latter will have (2) separate and distinct offenses, namely: (a) culpable violation of the Constitution and (b) betrayal of public trust.

   "Culpable violation of the Constitution" means a willful and intentional violation of the Constitution and not violations committed carelessly or inadvertently or a good faith or through an honest mistake of judgment.

   "Betrayal of public trust" on the other hand, is a catch-all phrase which reflects all acts even if not constituting a statute as a penal offense, which would render the officer unfit to continue in office. Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, however, added that, under the specific circumstances, the betrayal of public trust to be a ground for impeachment, the ostensible charges of misconduct must be of the same severity as treason and bribery, offenses that strike at the very heart of the life of the nation.

2. The charges of culpable violation of the Constitution and betrayal of public trust alleged in the Second Complaint relate to the following acts and/or omissions, to wit:

   a. "Betrayal of Public Trust"

      1) The blatant and unconscionable tax evasion case of the Ombudsman from 2006 onwards;

      2) The failure to take prompt and immediate action against former Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, former Sec. Leandro Mendoza, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, with regard to the NBN-ZTE Broadband Project;

      3) The delay in conducting and concluding an investigation on the death of Engr. Philip Andrew Pestaño aboard a Philippine Navy vessel;

      4) The failure to conduct an investigation with regard to the ever increasing threat of Jo Chua or Dejo Kadagasan in New York (3 August 2010).

   b. There can be no "culpable violation of the Constitution" and/or "betrayal of public trust" as charged by complainants Reyes, et al. against respondent Ombudsman. The said acts/omissions alleged in the Second Complaint do not constitute impeachable offenses.

4. Late Complaint Filed from 2006 onwards

   a. Complainant Reyes, et. al. argue that from 2006 onward the commission rate of Lance Y. Gokongwei, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of Cebu Air, Inc. (Cebu Air) has been increasing from 1% to 2% and that the Ombudsman failed to file the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) for the years 2006 and 2007 despite the fact that Cebu Air's commission rate for the years 2006 and 2007 increased from 1% to 2%.

   b. The claim is based on a purported 2009 report by the Transparency and Accountability Network which accused the Commission on Audit (COA) of failing to audit the Ombudsman's SALN for the years 2006 to 2008 and down from 63% for the previous years to a measly 14.47% or merely a quarter of the rate for 2007.

   c. Furthermore, according to the Complaint, the exact months were March, May, and June with 2006 rates at 6%, 3% and 5%, respectively. As of 31 October 2008, the commission rate stood at 7% with 2% accounted as commission out of total fees.

   d. Compared to the rate of other countries, a 7% commission rate (or even 12.5% or 15.45% for "absolutely none" Such dismal performance allegedly amounts to dereliction of duty which reveals the irresponsible acts of the Ombudsman on the ground of "betrayal of public trust".

   e. The allegations of Reyes, et. al. are false, the commission rate of Lance Gokongwei from 1% to 2% is between the Gokongwei-owned Cebu Air and the regular counsel for the year 2006 to 15.45%, higher than the previous years of 2008 and 2007.

   f. "Lance Gokongwei" is separate and distinct from the unfortunate investigation stage, though both were commenced by the Office of the Ombudsman.

      The Final Investigation Office of the Office of the Ombudsman is primarily responsible for the conduct of fact-finding investigations of cases filed before the Office of the Ombudsman. All the early stages, i.e. the fact-finding investigation is done discreetly. Hence, if evidence was gathered to determine whether criminal complaint may be filed with the Office of the Ombudsman. At the early stage, no formal complaint is yet filed since the respondents are not yet named since no identities.

      On the other hand, in preliminary investigation proper, respondents are named and the investigation is made public. The respondents are given the opportunity to present counter-evidence to their defense. After the evidence on both sides are considered, a decision is made whether or not a probable cause is made. If probable cause is found, an information will be filed with the proper court against the respondents. Otherwise, the case against them will be dismissed.

   g. Based on Ombudsman, it was ruled that the fact-finding investigation done by the Ombudsman is not part of preliminary investigation but preparatory to it.

   h. All it ever was only for the sake of argument that there is a decline in commission rate from 2006 onwards, a condition and/or culpable act/s/ omission committed by the Ombudsman is not punishable therefore. It is not the function of the respondent Ombudsman to control and/or regulate.

      Moreover, the question of existence in deciding the matter of a criminal case before the Ombudsman should be different from the question of existence required for the commencement of a civil case or administrative case. In the former, the law requires proof beyond reasonable doubt, while the latter only requires a preponderance of evidence.

      In the commission rate, therefore, cannot be attributed to the respondent Ombudsman, who only determines the existence of probable cause in filing criminal information before the Courts.

   i. Finally, the respondent Ombudsman herself does not possess the criminal cases filed before the Sandiganbayan or the regular courts. The Office of the Special Prosecutor ("OSP") prosecutes these cases before the Sandiganbayan while the cases filed before the Courts. The respondent Ombudsman has no hand in directing as to how the OSP will try the cases before the Courts.

      Thus, absent any allegation that the respondent Ombudsman has committed any culpable act/s/ omission in the prosecution of the cases filed before the Courts, there is no reason to hold the alleged acts/omission tantamount to "betrayal of public trust" which would warrant respondent Ombudsman's impeachment.

      In the same way that a car accident case cannot be blamed on the Secretary of Justice who, like the Ombudsman, investigates and prosecutes criminal cases, the Ombudsman cannot be impeached on that basis.

5. NBN-ZTE Deal

   1) On 5 October 2007, Samuel Ike filed a complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman against former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, Jr. relative to the NBN-ZTE Broadband scandal.

   2) Samuel claims that despite the provisions of Rule 112, Section 3 of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure, which purportedly requires the respondent Ombudsman to take action within ten (10) days from receipt of the complaint, the latter failed to act on the complaint for which he filed a motion to that effect on 30 February 2008, or more than 20 months after Samuel filed the complaint, and only after she called for a public hearing on the NBN-ZTE Broadband scandal.

   3) According to Samuel, during the actual hearings of the case, Manila newspaper items, including Chairman Abalos, were given two (2) days from receipt of the complaints, or up to 09 February 2008, within which to file their respective counter-affidavits. She claims that despite the failure of the respondents to file their counter-affidavits on the said date, the respondent Ombudsman still allowed them to submit their counter-affidavits during the 5 March 2008 hearing. Samuel, as an ordinary citizen, deep resentment on the procedure, particularly the delay in the Ombudsman's action on the complaint, which is why he filed a similar complaint on violation of the Constitution's mandate on public accountability. Actions other than expedience or deliberate excommunication that amounts to "betrayal of public trust" — like, in view of the heightened public scrutiny of the NBN-ZTE scandal and the alleged involvement of high-ranking government officials, the Ombudsman's failure to act promptly on the complaint, the Ombudsman's failure to conduct motu proprio investigation, the Ombudsman's failure to file charges against Mike Arroyo, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo.

   Reasons or basis in Samuel's allegations stated.

   4) First. The duty of the respondent Ombudsman to prosecute cases committed by public officials and employees does not preclude her from conducting an investigation against same. To a less (2) of the respondent Ombudsman's duties is the power to conduct investigations. Indeed, it is a well-settled rule that the Office of the Ombudsman has discretion to determine whether a criminal case, given its merits and circumstances, should or should not be filed or not. The Supreme Court itself recognized this sole discretion of the Ombudsman to determine whether a criminal case should be filed or not against PGMA, et. al/Mike Arroyo. It stated that the discretion of the Ombudsman in prosecuting or dismissing a complaint filed before [her] will not be interfered with absent a clear case of grave abuse of discretion.

   5) Second. There has been no finding of grave abuse of discretion against respondent Ombudsman with respect to her findings of probable cause in connection with (2) cases against Chairman Abalos and Secretary Romulo Neri.

   6) Third. While the complaint of Samuel with regard to the NBN-ZTE deal was received by the Office of the Ombudsman on 05 October 2007, it is not true that the respondent Ombudsman acted on the complaint only on 19 February 2008 or after more than (5) months.

      Following the normal rules of investigation obtained by her predecessors, the Office of the Ombudsman conducted its "case-building" from the time records and complaints are filed before the Office of the Ombudsman Quezon City Office. The following records transpired from the time the complaint was filed with the Office of the Ombudsman on 05 October 2007:

      a. The complaint of Samuel Ike filed on 5 October 2007 was docketed as CPL-C-07-1858;

      b. The complaint was immediately referred to the Fact-Investigation Office for fact-finding investigation on 11 October 2007 for review of the Evaluation Slip dated 11 October 2007;

      c. The Evaluation Report was submitted by the Fact-Investigation Office on 12 December 2007;

      d. The Evaluation Report recommended the consolidation of the complaint together with OMB-C-C-07-0425 (cited OMB-C-07-0397) (Pedilla vs. Abalos, et. al.) and OMB-C-C-07-0426 (OMB-C-07-0398) (Pedilla vs. Abalos, et. al.) for purposes of conducting preliminary investigation and recommended indictment;

      e. On 7 January 2008, the Evaluation Report was endorsed to the Fact-Investigation Office for FIRM;

      f. On 9 January 2008, the endorsement (FIRM) was made to FIRM-C for consolidation with the complaint filed by Daniel Pang-ilog Ike, docketed as OMB-C-C-07-0425 (and OMB-C-C-07-0397);

      g. The case was docketed as OMB-C-C-08-0035 (Pedilla vs. Abalos, et. al.) – Assault by public/ivory investigation and administrative adjudication;

      h. On 19 February 2008, the first public hearing on the case-consolidated cases was held.

   7) From the foregoing, it is clear that the allegation that "the Ombudsman took cognizance of the case only on 19 February 2008" is false. It is also clear that the date of Samuel and the Office of the Ombudsman is not due to and as the complaint called for (15) days from receipt thereof to take action and thus without basis.

   8) Fourth. The respondent Ombudsman did not participate in the case. Therefore, Atty. Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, who is the husband of Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and her husband, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, on the ground that there is no evidence directly or indirectly linking him to the NBN-ZTE Deal was presented. Atty. Arroyo was not involved in the NBN-ZTE deal and, therefore, according to the Special Prosecutor, cannot be given any verified duty weight.

   9) And these reasons, there is absolutely no basis in charging that the respondent Ombudsman failed to take action on the complaints against the immediate relative, against then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and/or her husband, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, with regard to the NBN-ZTE Broadband project.

6. The Alleged Delay in Conducting the Investigation on the Death of Engr. Philip Andrew Pestaño Aboard the Navy Vessel

   1) The Second Complaint charges, among others, that the Office of the Ombudsman has caused delay in the investigation of the death on 27 September 1995 of Engr. Philip Andrew Pestaño ("Philip") on board the naval vessel BRP Rajah Humabon. According to the complaint, Philip's death was allegedly due to the effects of the administration of anti-tetanus serum to him on the eve of Philip's recruitment – an investigation up to this present makes the officer of respondent Ombudsman.

   2) To support their Complaint, Samuel cited the findings of the Uniformed Services Human Rights Committee ("USHRC") under the Task Force Delamad Project of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("ICCPR") which purportedly found that Philip's death was caused or related to alleged anti-tetanus shots administered to him by the Philippine Navy. Samuel also claims that the USHRC is calling for a thorough investigation on the circumstances surrounding the death of Philip, and that the Ombudsman should conduct its own investigation on the circumstances of Philip's death. Samuel concludes that this is a direct indictment against the Office of the Ombudsman which amounts to dereliction of duty on the ten years have, the alleged "betrayal of public trust".

   The above allegations are not true.

   3) To begin with, the records will show that the request sent to the Ombudsman to look into the death of the Philippine Navy Officer was received by the Office of the Ombudsman on 3 December 2009. This is contrary to the following records of the case:

   a. Due to the death of Philip on 27 September 1995, a complaint was filed by the Spouses Pestaño before the Office of the Ombudsman on 26 March 2008. The complaint was entitled "Pestaño and Dolor Pestaño vs. John Doe" and docketed as OMB-MIL-08-0255.

   b. On 2 September 1998, then Office of the Ombudsman – Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices ("MOLEO") came out with an Evaluation Report recommending that the case be closed and terminated without prejudice.

   c. On 7 September 1998, the MOLEO Evaluation Report was endorsed to Ombudsman Aniano A. Desierto for approval.

   d. On 4 March 2003, (5½ of the Project Date of Philip) also recommended that the investigation of the case be closed and terminated, citing the lack of evidence of the Military investigators.

   e. On 7 April 2003, Ombudsman Aniano A. Desierto approved the recommendation to close and terminate the case.

   f. The (5) years thereafter, or on 27 October 2008, and this during the term of Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, another case complaint was filed by the brother and partner (also not) and filed by the Spouses Pestaño (Angelo Andrew Pestaño and Dolor Pestaño) before the MOLEO. The case was entitled "Philip and Dolor Pestaño vs. Col. Ricardo Galvez, (CDR) Reynaldo P. Lopez, AMC, Makati and (LT) Aquino, (CDR) Candiago C. Dasa, Jr., Alfredson Jr., Alex, APO, Sandy Alberto, Lt. Jonathan Cortez, Lt. Ruben Rosas, PO Gerald G. Amoranto and PO2 Edd Lorenzo F. Ignacio," docketed as OMB-P-C-08-0396 (and OMB-P-A-08-0255-J).

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   j. On 26 January 2009, Spouses Pestaño filed their Joint Reply-Affidavit.

   k. On 29 November 2009, the Orders (1) cases (i.e. OMB-MIL-08-0255, OMB-P-C

DENNIS MUÑOZ doing what he enjoys—giving tourists a calesa ride in Dagupan City.

Night unveils 'good, old days' of Dagupan calesa

By Yolanda Sotelo
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—When the sun sets and the city's streetlights are turned on, calesas start plying downtown.

These horse-driven carriages offer rides to people who want another way to see the downtown area and relive the "good old days" when the main transportation in the city were calesas or carretelas (coaches-drawn carts).

Fernando saw him in one of his trips and asked him to bring back the horse-drawn carriages to Dagupan's streets.

The calesa rides were introduced during the fiesta celebration in September 2003, when many holidaymakers returned to the city, Muyaldo, 34, said.

He said he asked coachmen from different areas, like Malasiqui town and San Carlos City, to go to Dagupan so they could offer rides to residents, especially the holidaymakers that year.

Now, at least 20 calesa carriages, each accommodating three passengers, ply Dagupan's streets.

The carriage owners and coachmen, all from the villages of Sabloyan and Mangin here, have been organized to control fares and encourage discipline, said Muyaldo, the group's leader.

The carriages have also installed chicken and cochoco carry flashlights to ensure safety at night.

Muyaldo said a sightseeing tour around downtown takes around 20 minutes (depending on traffic) and costs each passenger P50. Each trip has a minimum of three passengers. For longer trips, coachmen charge P300 an hour for passengers may negotiate for lower rates.

HOMETOWN *Snapshot*

The carriages may look solid in streets dominated by cars, jeeps and tricycles, but drivers seemed to be used to their presence and give way whenever they hear the cry "olang, olang" sound that announces the carriages' arrival.

Calesa rides in the city started in 2001 when Dennis Muyaldo, son of a coachman (calesa driver) who just arrived from work in Tarlac, bought a carriage and a horse and went around the city to satisfy his longings for a calesa again.

Then Mayor Benjamin Lim and former Councilor Melchor

CONFLICT WITH CHINA

PH Army to stay put in Spratlys

By Redempto D. Anda
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The defense officials said here Philippine troops would continue escorting a vessel conducting a survey of areas in the Reed Bank in the Spratlys Islands for oil and gas deposits despite the harassment of the vessel by Chinese ships in recent incidents.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ricardo Dino Al visited the AFP's Western Command (Wescom) headquarters here to assure a small contingent of Wescom soldiers of the AFP's continued support for them.

The Wescom contingent is guarding the Philippines' claim to the Spratlys and vessels conducting oil and gas surveys in the area.

The two top defense officials said the Coast Guard vessels tasked with escorting the AFP's Sea Truck, which is conducting oil and gas exploration activities in the Reed Bank, will remain in the area until the survey ship has completed its tasks.

Two Chinese gunboats recently came too close to the survey ship, forcing the Philippine military to send aircraft and vessels to drive the Chinese boats away.

Foreign affairs authorities said the Chinese government has been asked to explain the harassment.

Lt. Gen. Jeanette Sabban, head of Wescom, has been quoted after the harassment that two airplanes were sent to Reed Bank but the Chinese gunboats had left when the planes arrived there.

Philippine military officials said the Chinese boats came close to the survey ship at least twice, apparently threatening to ram it but did not fire any shots.

The highly contested Spratlys islands have rich fishing grounds and are believed to also at one time oil and gas deposits.

During his visit to Wescom, Gazmin said the Chinese government has yet to respond to the Philippine protests against the Kennan incident.

"We haven't heard from the Chinese government yet," Gazmin said during his visit here.

The Philippine defense officials said they requested the Voyager, which was commissioned by the Philippine energy department to do the survey in complete its mission in the next few weeks.

The Reed Bank, located within the country's exclusive economic zone in the western flank of Palawan in the south China Sea, is believed to host a much bigger deposit of oil and gas than the adjoining Camago-Malampaya oil field.

3 Contemplacion sons transferred to Munti jail

By Marizar Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

STA. CRUZ, Laguna—The three sons of Filipino maid Flor Contemplacion who have been sentenced to life terms in prison on drug charges have been transferred to the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City, a high-security facility on Monday night.

The three were transferred Friday noon following a Laguna Regional Trial Court ruling early this month that convicted them of drug pushing, Senior Insp. Jerome Ramano, deputy warden of the San Pablo City district jail, said by phone.

Sendrick, 26, and his twin brothers Joel and Jun-Jun, 31, were arrested in October 2001 in a buy-bust operation in San Pablo City, Laguna. Antidrug operatives recovered 19,000 worth of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) from them.

THE CONTEMPLACION brothers have left this prison in San Pablo City and moved to the National Penitentiary

The siblings' sister Raoul, 33, who is currently an employee in the House of Representatives, told the Inquirer in an earlier interview that the family planned to appeal the RTC's decision. She, however, wasn't optimistic.

The family has an

All March trivia file set appeared.

Flor Contemplacion was the domestic helper executed by hanging in Singapore in 1995 for the murder of fellow maid Delia Maga and her Singaporean ward.

Her execution triggered an outrage in the Philippines and strained relations with the Singaporean government which turned down all appeals, including from then President Fidel V. Ramos, to stay the execution.

. . . OMBUDSMAN IS INNOCENT

FILED ADVT

Blast rocks 2nd reactor

NUCLEAR REACTOR EXPLOSION Smoke rises from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power complex in this still image from video footage on Monday. KYODO

From page A1

lih they had no choice if they wanted to avoid a complete meltdown.

In the end, the hydrogen in the released steam mixed with oxygen in the atmosphere and set off the blast.

The inner containment shell surrounding the Unit 3 reactor was intact, Edano said, allaying some fears of the risk to the environment and public.

But the outer building around the reactor appeared to have been devastated, with only a skeletal frame remaining.

Tokyo Electric Power Co., Tepco, which operates the nuclear plant, said radiation levels at Unit 3 were well under the levels which a nuclear operator must file a report to the government.

A similar explosion occurred on Saturday at the plant's Unit 1, injuring four workers, one seriously. Rescue and decontaminating much of the zone building.

Fully exposed rods

Shortly after Monday's explosion, Tepco warned it had lost the ability to cool Unit 2. Hours later, the company said fuel rods in that unit were fully exposed, at least temporarily.

The company was trying to channel sea water into the reactor to cover the rods, and then drain and prevent another explosion at the stricken plant.

More than 180,000 people have evacuated the area in recent days, and up to 160 may have been exposed to radiation—posing misery unto those already devastated by the twin disasters.

Japan's meteorological agency reported the prevailing wind in the area of the stricken nuclear plant was heading east—to the Pacific.

Seventeen US military personnel involved in helicopter relief missions were found to have been exposed to low levels of radiation upon returning to the USS Ronald Reagan, an aircraft carrier about 160 km. off shore.

US officials said the exposure level was roughly equal to one month's normal exposure to natural background radiation in the environment, and after scrubbing with soap and water, the 17 were declared contamination free.

But as a precaution, the officials said the carrier and other US 7th Fleet ships involved in relief efforts had shifted to another area.

While Japan has aggressively prepared for years for major earthquakes, warehousing buildings and running drills, the impact of the tsunami—which came so quickly that even many people managed to flee to high ground—was tremendous.

Emergency in 6 reactors

Officials have declared a states of emergency at six Fukushima reactors, whereas Friday's two disasters knocked out the main cooling systems and backup generators. Three are at Daiichi and three at the nearby Fukushima Daini complex.

Those operating, though, but been housed on Daiichi Units 1 and 3, whose operators have been tunneling in six water in a last-ditch measure to cool the reactors.

A complete meltdown—the melting of the radioactive core—could release radioactive contaminated into the environment and pose major, widespread health risks.

Edano said no Fukushima reactor was near that point, and he was confident of keeping the worst scenarios.

Little risk

International scientists say there are serious dangers but little risk of a Chernobyl-style catastrophe in 1986. Chernobyl, they note, had no containment shell around the reactor.

"The likelihood there will be a huge fire like at Chernobyl or a major environmental release like at Chernobyl, I think that's basically impossible," said James F. Stubbins, a nuclear energy professor at the University of Illinois.

And, some analysts noted, the length of time since the nuclear crisis began provides that the chemical reactions inside the reactor were not moving quickly toward a complete meltdown.

"We've seen into the heat the day. Whenever is happening in that reactor is happening in slow motion. It might take [a while], " said Mark Hibbs, a senior associate at the nuclear policy program for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "They've succeeded in prolonging the timeline of the accident sequence."

Radio bears

But despite official assurances, many residents expressed fear over the situation.

"I don't trust words about the quake," said Kenji Kobiba, a construction worker who lives near the plant. "Now I'm worried about radiation." "It's quite as an emergency center in Fukushima, about 60 km from the stricken reactors.

Overall, more than 1,500 people had been screened for radiation exposure in the area, officials said.

The US nuclear agency said a state of emergency was also declared on Sunday at another complex, the Onagawa power plant, after higher than permitted levels of radiation were measured there. The agency said Japan informed it that all three of those reactors there were under control.

Four nuclear complexes in northeastern Japan have reported some damage from the quake or the tsunami. AP

Economic losses in northeast Japan may reach $183 billion

From page A1

"The quake is expected to have considerable impact on a wide range of our country's economic activities," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano said.

Energy squeeze

While Japan's industrial centers in the south and west seemed to be spared the worst, the crisis at damaged nuclear plants north of Tokyo was threatening to create an energy squeeze that could set back all sectors of the economy.

The nuclear industry provides around a third of the Japan's power needs.

To help bring electricity back to the devastated areas, utilities across Japan are cutting back and sharing power, imposing rolling blackouts that will affect factories, stores and homes throughout the nation. The emergency effort is expected to last up to two weeks, but it could last longer.

"The big question is whether this will significantly affect Japan's ability to produce goods for any extended period of time," said Edward Yardeni, an independent economist and investment strategist.

Bleak outlook

The bleak outlook sparked a 6.2 percent plunge in the Nikkei 225 stock index in Tokyo on Monday, as companies from Sony to Fujitsu to Toyota sealed back operations.

The Bank of Japan, in an effort to preempt a further deterioration in the economy, eased monetary policy on Monday by expanding an asset-buying program.

"The damage of the earthquake has been geographically widespread and thus, for the time being, production is likely to decline and there is also concern that the acceleration of firms and households might decrease," the central bank said in a statement.

The central bank earlier injected a record $183 billion (15 trillion yen) into money markets to defend the already fragile economy. By flooding the banking system with cash, the central bank hopes that banks will continue lending money and meet the likely surge in demand for funds.

Car firms shut down

Assembly plants for Japan's big three automakers—Toyota, Honda and Nissan—were closed on Sunday and planned to remain closed on Monday. Toyota said that its factories would be closed at least through Wednesday.

Automakers and some plants experienced damage that was not extensive. Damage to suppliers and to the nation's transportation infrastructure, however, was reported to affect the ability of the car assemblers to make and move their products.

Japan's economic outlook already problematic, is now even more uncertain, economists and analysts say, because the dimensions of the disaster remain unclear, especially at the damaged nuclear plants.

Another kind of recession

Japan, already saddled with debt before the size of its $5.4-trillion economy, may suffer "another kind of recession," said Mark Zandi, chief economist of Moody's Analytics.

Economic activity in Japan contracted in the fourth quarter of 2010, and the country was overtaken by China as the world's second-largest economy, after the United States.

Activity may well shrink for the first half of this year, Zandi said, though he predicted that the rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of the quake would help provide a rebound to the second half.

Reconstruction and relief could run in the tens of billions of dollars may require Japan to make tough decisions about government spending. Its ratio of government debt to the economy's annual output is already at 200 percent, the highest among industrialized nations and far higher than in the United States.

In reconstruction, economists say, may make sense to government spending elsewhere a necessity.

Stronger yen

The yen is expected to strengthen against the dollar, as Japanese investors bring money back from overseas to shore up their savings and provide money for the rebuilding campaign. Those financial flows back into Japan will drive up demand for the yen, increasing its value.

After the Kobe earthquake in 1995, the yen appreciated 20 percent against the dollar over a few months, dampening US demand for Japanese exports.

If energy costs and infrastructure damage hinder production to a significant way, it could also harm Japanese companies and affect their overseas profits.

Japanese automakers have shifted much of their manufacturing overseas in recent years. But some popular models are still made in Japan for export, including fuel-efficient cars like the Toyota Prius and the Honda Fit.

Disruptions to exports could hurt sales at a time when rising gasoline prices have increased demand for those cars in the United States.

Hi-tech goods

Japan is also a crucial global supplier of electronic goods and parts used in an array of industrial and consumer goods. The nation's factories produce about 40 percent of the lightweight chips used to store data in smartphones and tablet computers, and it is also a leading maker of liquid crystal displays used in consumer electronics products.

Most high-tech goods these days are produced through carefully orchestrated procurement and manufacturing networks that combine parts from around the globe, often shipped on-right daily production schedules. Even temporary shortages can drive up prices sharply for a while.

The daily spot market for cut chips will most likely feel the impact soonest. "There will be a lot of nervousness," said Jim Handy, an analyst at Objective Analysis, a semiconductor research firm. "This may create phenomenal shortages in the spot market."

Productivity losses

Companies with chips that have point only just very through the manufacturing process would most likely have to backtrack a step and rework those chips when the power returns. Doing so could add a day or two to the time required to finish a batch of chips.

"We're going to have productivity losses," Handy said.

Hans Stimer, managing vice president at Gartner, a technology research company, said a colleague in Japan, once Tokyo, told that that he was scheduled for rolling blackouts twice a day.

However, clearing off power to chip manufacturer twice a day would be impossible to manage, he said, because fluctuations in power cause defects and high losses.

Water supplies

Water is also an important component of the chip making process, Handy said, and any cut in water supplies or an increase in contaminated water would hurt production.

In the end, only large importers manufacturers may end up getting their chip orders, Handy said. Smaller firms will seem likely to receive less than their contracts stipulate.

Sony's six factories in the region affected by the earthquake were all damaged, and the company said it had no clear idea when they would reopen. All the facilities have backup generators.

The destruction was more severe at a plant in Miyagi prefecture that makes Blu-ray discs and magnetic tapes.

The tsunami flooded the first floor and the surrounding area, forcing nearly 1,100 workers and 110 neighbors to seek safety upstairs. On Saturday, Sony chartered a helicopter to deliver supplies to those stranded.

By Tuesday afternoon, all but 20 had left the plant on foot on their families and homes.

Fernside Semiconductor's plant in Sendai, which makes chips for the automotive and consumer electronics industries, was also shut down. All employees were safely evacuated, the company said.

The overall effect on the technology market, Handy said, would be serious.

"It looks like it's going to be pretty awful," he wrote Tuesday. The railroads—there could be plants that shut down," he said. "All these things are going to cause problems. Just pile all that together and it's all bad."

Reports from New York Times Times Service, AFP and Reuters

Is PH ready? Senators set inquiry

From page A1

Christchurch, New Zealand, thus there are some who raised the possibility that a powerful earthquake happening in the Philippines could not be far behind," Zubiri said in Resolution No. 426 seeking the inquiry.

He chairs the committee on environment and natural resources.

In the wake of the disasters in Japan, President Aquino yesterday ordered government officials to review the country's preparedness to deal with earthquakes and tsunamis.

"The President ordered a review of our tsunami and earthquake preparedness," Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang said.

He said Pik Aquino was expecting to be briefed on the results of the review by the Office of the Civil Defense this week.

Earthquake preparedness

Sen. Loren Legarda said that the Senate should look into the state of earthquake preparedness of Metro Manila, and the actions taken to reduce the earthquake risk.

Such a review, she said, was critical in view of the 2004 Metro Manila Earthquake Impact Reduction Study (MMEIRS) which said that a magnitude 7.2 earthquake earthquake could happen anytime in the metropolis as an offshoot of the movement of the Pérez Valley Fault.

Scale of devastation

The study provided a glimpse of the devastation wrought by such a powerful quake: 180,000 homes destroyed, and 340,000 other homes damaged; collapse of hospitals, fire stations, the result, the death of 34,000 people, and injuries to 114,000 others, the said.

The ensuing fires would result in an additional 18,000 fatalities, while power and tele phone lines would be interrupted, Legarda added.

"Given this, may I pose this question to all: Are we prepared to respond to this national crisis scenario?" To all national and local leaders: Are we doing all we can to lessen the possible losses from the likely earthquake event? Have we acted upon the key recommendations of MMEIRS?" she said in a privilege speech.

The study jointly undertaken by Japan International Cooperating Agency, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, was aimed at formulating a master plan for reducing earthquake impact in the metropolis, according to Legarda.

Citing the results of the 2004 study, professor Julius Bolaños of the Philippine Navy said ready for a major quake.

Analysis paralysis

Bolaños said Metro Manila lacked rescue and evacuation facilities to cope with such a major disaster. More worrisome was the study's claim that a major fault line transecting the city was approaching its "active phases," he said.

"That was in 2004 but our government agencies have not acted on it. There seems to be an analysis paralysis," he said.

The study's chief recommendation was the creation of a legal framework and institutional capacity for disaster risk management in Metro Manila. In particular, the report stresses, included the passage of a comprehensive law on disaster risk reduction and management.

"However, the required action by the local government units and other agencies of government on the other key recommendations must be monitored and their progress reviewed if we truly intend to learn," Legarda said.

State of tsunami warning

Legarda, chair of the climate change committee, also pointed to the need for the Senate to inquire into the state of our early warning systems for tsunami.

"Moreover, we must examine the capacity of our local communities to implement disaster risk reduction measures, especially in the barangays, toward oversighting local capacity to empower and organize for any disasters," she said.

In his resolution, Zubiri said it would be timely for Congress to revisit the status of the comprehensive National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) whose implementation was spelled out in the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010.

Nearly a year after the enactment of the law, "it is now timely for Congress and concerned citizens to be informed of the status and implementation of the country's NDRRMP," he said.

Testing of food imports

Maintaining amid the anxiety over the nuclear crisis in Japan, the senator urged that

Please don't . . .

From page A1

hint from spreading unconfirmed reports and panicky scientific advisories through text messages, saying this causes undue panic.

Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the Department of Health National Epidemiology Center, said the DOH would monitor those coming straight to or almost online subways on their return to protect Filipinos from sickness they particularly fearing is from Japan.

"Actually, potassium iodide as salt is taken to prevent cancers involving the thyroid. It dissolves the radioactive iodine if that is the radioactive particle," Tayag said at a press conference.

But potassium iodide could be useless if a different radioactive element was involved, like plutonium, Tayag said. "If plutonium is the radioactive particle, that would entail a different treatment so please don't do food-stockings," he said.

Worst-case scenario

Assuming that a worst-case scenario would happen in the country, Tayag said it was advisable to "just remove your clothes and chew and take a shower to decontaminate yourselves."

If radioactive particles reached the country's ill-components would have "the speed depending on its half-life" because of the long distance it traveled, Tayag said. Manila is about 3,000 kilometers south of Tokyo.

Although exposure to radiation is a health concern with acute and long-term effects, such a condition is influenced by several factors: the type of radioactive particles involved, the amount and the duration of exposure and the distance from the source of the radioactivity both, Tayag explained.

Early symptoms of radiation exposure include vomiting, nausea, diarrhea and fever. Symptoms for more serious conditions include headache and hair loss, among others. Chronic effects of extreme radiation exposure include cancers and genetic malformations.

"I understand where this fear is coming from ... because if you look at the map, the Philippines is just an inch away from Japan but there is really no need to panic or to worry," Tayag said.

Dr. Jee Hyun-O, country director of the World Health Organization, said there was no need for "undue alarm" as prevailing wind conditions showed that the Philippines was out of the path of the cadmium emanating from the site of the nuclear explosion.

"Even if this happens, radioactive materials would not come to the Philippines. There are risks and public safety issues even in Japan and what is happening right now doesn't have any implications to the rest of the members of the Western Pacific region," Jee said.

Raymundo Ma Jr. from Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) chief said "there is no nuclear cloud from Japan" even after the second explosion at a nuclear plant yesterday morning.

Country not in danger

Dr. Ja Reen also noted that information from the nuclear plant showed that the Philippines was not in danger.

"From what we've been monitoring, no radiation will reach here. There will be no exposure to the public," she said.

Dr. Ja Reen said the International Atomic Energy Agency placed the Fukushima explosion, which injured several workers, at Level 4, on a 7-level scale.

The 1986 meltdown in Chernobyl was placed at Level 7, which indicates a major release of radioactive materials and widespread environmental health and contamination effects.

A Level 4 incident means that there "is an accident but there is no significant offsite effects," the PNRI official said.

Normal levels

In a statement on Monday, the PNRI said radiation levels in the country's atmosphere was normal and showed "no increase" since the reading monitors in the Batanes island broke after last Friday's devastating earthquake and tsunami.

Should there be a radioactive nuclear meltdown and a nuclear cloud forms, a remote possibility, no one would be safe the plume from the site of the incident would not pass Philippine territory as of March 14, PNRI said, citing an advisory from the World Meteorological Organization.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the winds from Japan would not travel to the country.

Pagasa chief forecaster Robert Jose said the winds were moving west to east, or from Japan to the Pacific Ocean.

Jose said the typhoon expected to hit the public next to spread extreme weather phenomenon, "Former Secretary [Mona] Montejo says there's no immediate threat to the country from the nuclear accident," Communications Secretary Ricky Carandang said.

President Aquino met with Montejo and other officials for a briefing on the situation in Japan.

In Central Visayas, government agencies called a press conference to counter the bad messages. With reports from Jhesa Pauchogan in Manila and Candace B. Mosqoso, Cebu Daily News

No report of Filipino casualties in Japan quake

By Philip C. Tubeza and Jerry E. Esplanada (in Manila) and Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

A DOH unit operated by the Coalition and tsunami that hit Japan on Friday, but all 20 Filipinos were unhurt, officials said yesterday.

Authorities also said that so far there had been no reports of Filipinos among the casualties in the Japanese disaster, although the stillmost group. Migrante International said 24 were missing in the aftermath of the tremblor.

Migrante reported earlier that nine Filipinos were missing but that they were now all accounted for.

"So far, no Filipinos are among the recorded fatalities," Philippine Ambassador Manuel Lopez reported to the Cooperation of Foreign Affairs yesterday.

MV Coral Ring

Carmelita Dimzon, chief of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, said the government was arranging for repatriation the 22 Filipinos whose ship, the MV Coral Ring, was operated after evacuating crews for the port of Onahama in Japan's Fukushima prefecture on Friday.

"The ship was immobilized after the earthquake and tsunami hit. They moved for the North at Onahama," Dimzon said in an interview.

She said the Japanese Coast Guard rescued the Filipinos.

"They're safe and are now billeted in a hotel near Narita airport," Dimzon said.

She said the seamen's employers tried to book them on a flight back to the Philippines, but all the flights out of there were full.

Hotlines

Lopez said a team sent to Sendai City in the disaster area rolled out 19 Filipino students from Tohoku University, who were all safe. They also said Filipinos in two evacuation centers in the area were in good shape.

He also released the following assistance numbers for Filipinos to call in case of emergency: 03) 3563-3372, (03) 5562-2577, (03) 5562-1576 and (03) 3562-2990, e-mail through vmorgovsky@philembassyjapan. The hotlines of the consulates in Osaka, Nagoya and Moripko: (081) 49-863-7981, (081) 45-6-8099 and (081) 829-9139, respectively.

After yesterday the Philippine mission to the United Nations cited Filipinos in Fukushima should "move clear of presumed radioactive sources in hospitals and industrial facilities" that may have been adversely affected by blasts in nuclear reactors in the area.

Constant fear

The Philippine mission said that the International Atomic Energy Agency was seeking information on the status of radioactive sources in Japan and should events there impact on the Philippines, Manila should seek assistance from the UN body.

Rizalyn Llanda Gonzalez, a chef from Negros Occidental who is in Tokyo, said that Filipinos in Japan lived in constant fear of more big quakes and a nuclear fallout.

"We are prepared now as we are short history clothes in case of another emergency and our forex bags outlet service. Food and first aid kits to help us, most specially things that will make us warm," Gonzalez told the Inquirer in a phone call in Russian.

"I am afraid, but you know I want to say that this is our message of God be mankind to value Earth and life," he said. "God, I hope the tremors end."

There are 400 skilled workers from Negros Occidental and 20 from Laguna de Oro who are in Nadre and Tokyo, manning under the Negros Japan Business Assistance Exchange Association Inc.

All of them are safe, said association secretary general Jocelyn Zuno.

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Philippines-Mongolia match 'live' on Studio 23

THE SEMIFINAL leg of the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifying Series 10 between the Philippines and Mongolia at the National Sports Complex in Dasmariñas, Cavite, will be shown live via satellite on Studio 23 from 12 noon today. The broadcast of the match televised on Studio 23 will feature Filipino commentators Fernand Poblete and Rob Charlesworth. Studio 23 also broadcasted the first match of the Challenge Cup from the Rizal Memorial Stadium in Manila City last Feb. 6.

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Minus key men, Azkals try to toss out Mongolia today

By Cecil P. Tupas

DUBLIN—A Philippine football team known in Ifsher in adversity faces its biggest challenge yet when it battles Mongolia minus several key players Tuesday in the second leg of their AFC Challenge Cup clash at the National Stadium in Ulan Bator.

Kickoff is at 3 p.m. with the Azkals also hoping to overcome the sub-zero conditions against the Mongolians, who need to win by at least three goals to prevent the the Filipinos from marching the group stage.

The default was the first leg, 2-0, on goals from Phil Younghusband and Chieffy Caligdong at the Dasmari Stadium in Bacoor last Feb. 9.

Though they trained as well as to seek shelter in Gobitsha City in earthquake-ravaged Japan, the Azkals managed just one training session in Ulan Bator in minus 10 degrees Celsius temperature since they only got their luggage on Monday morning.

The match is expected to be played at temperatures ranging from minus 4 to minus 6 degrees, and the players believe that they can weather the challenge as long as they stay mobile on the pitch.

"As long as we keep moving, I think we will be okay," said skipper Phil Younghusband.

The Azkals will miss goalkeeper Neil Etheridge, defender Rob Gier and midfielders Chieffy Caligdong and Jason de Jong.

Edward Gastopera is expected to fill in for Etheridge, while Jason Sabio will likely start in place of Gier. Neil Crotter and Peter Gregan are seen line up replace De Jong in a defensive midfield role.

As if the treacherous journey from Ifsherdon to Ulan Bator wasn't enough, a member of the team, Ray Jonsson, found himself unable to make it to Ulan Bator on time because team officials already in the Mongolian capital kept his passport.

Jonsson, the reliable fill-in/double defender, was not prevented by Chinese immigration to board a flight to Ulan Bator for fear that he might be sent back because he did not have a Mongolian visa, which is usually issued on arrival in the capital city.

See page 2, a letter of guarantee from the Mongolian Football Federation would convince Chinese immigration, and Jonsson was forced to take another flight to Incheon, South Korea, where he was to board a flight to Ulan Bator Monday night.

Philippine Football Federation president Mariano "Nonong" Araneta said he'll take matter manager Dan Palami believe the challenges faced by the Azkals just to make it to Mongolia will motivate them to play well.

"This will test-tone them further," said Araneta. "I think what they have to think about is what they should be blessed that they are safe now. I just want them to rely no on the match. I expect them to fight hard after all of these adversities."

"This just tests the resolve of our team," said Palami. "If we want to go to the next level, we must overcome these challenges and I think we have a team that's capable of making it past Mongolia."

The Azkals don't see any problem beating Mongolia under normal conditions, but the cold weather has raised concerns.

Phil Younghusband shares Araneta's sentiment, saying the Azkals are the better

EIGHT IN, THREE OUT · Three of the Azkals' starting eleven in the first leg at the Pennard Stadium in Bacoor—Neil Etheridge, Rob Gier and Jason De Jong—will miss the match in Ulan Bator today. Standing from left, Aly Borromeo, Jason Younghusband, Ian Arevalo, Ethan Hoge, Gio Anton del Rosario. Front row, same order: Neil Crotter, Phil Younghusband, Emelio Caligdong, Jason De Jong and Ray Jonsson. RAFY JUNIO

players individually than the Mongolians.

"We're more confident now than in the first leg because we have seen them play," said Younghusband.

The Azkals' German coach Hans Michael Weiss expects the Mongolians to shift to a more attacking style of play this time.

In the Feb. 9 match, Mongolia played on the defensive, tightened the spaces, and mass-manned Younghusband, making it difficult for the Azkals to score more goals.

"Mongolia will not have to attack and we want to catch them on the break," said Weiss. "We will be playing it safe. My team will not be pressured to score because only the conditions can cause damage to us."

Younghusband added: "They will need to score...so they will commit more once the second ball has given us more space."

"We expect them to come out strong, but if we hold down in the first half, I think we're going to be okay," said Borromeo.

Salud tells Douthit: Focus on the game

By Jun Navarro

MANILA (Courtesy of team Ifsher was told "to focus on the game" after he was fined P5,000 while his Ifsher Boys Lady Tigrado got away with a heavy penalty following their elimination Saturday.

Coach Salud Douthit, who had accumulated 3 points, the sanctioned tourn ament's committee's penalties, and Tigrado, who got away with a P1,000 fine after beating their series in the PBA offing yesterday.

Douthit was fined more 20 points) was penalized for exceeding an offense while Tigrado was slapped with a technical for a second offense during a heated moment of the game won by Ifsher's Gilas, 1:30 AM.

Salud said he appealed Douthit's misdemeanor during the second quarter in Ragrant 1 foul, which caused the referee who worked the game.

The commissioner also warned our three to Rain Or Ifsher coach Tony Dalon and forward Jason Ilagan.

Belga was fined P5,000 for a flagrant 1 foul on Tam 78 Ifsher import Brad Hatch at which Ilagan was fined P5,000 for shooting at the ref's during TNT's 89-78 win over Rain or Shine Sunday.

NLEX five tests spunk vs solid Freego Jeans

By Jasmine N. Paje

COACH BONOT the number getter was the one mobilized. NLEX signal for the first time when it tangles with Freego Jeans today in the 2013 PBA D-League Foundation Cup.

The Road Warriors found an opposing name led by Ifsher Philippines, including the highly touted Clifford Hodge, as well as members Eric Salonga, Ian Sebastian, Cedric Caloy, Jason and former PBA cager Ogie Menor.

Eliminations is 4 p.m., after the 2 p.m. duel between the Junior Powerade Tigers and the PCA Old Boys in the PBA Gym in Bataan.

"We have different players coming in and out. So it's a matter of how we'll gel," said Bonot (Jay).

Meanwhile, the league chopped a P15,000 fine on Mayerlid Tong-out Darius Daniel, who was ejected after elbowing Colonia Jalen Reynolds in the third quarter of Saturday's inaugural game won by the Jeansmen.

Coach Leo Austria hopes that reinforcement could pay dividends for Freego, which boasts the core of the Alaska team squad that made it to the Chief Final four last year.

"Any team is capable of making it to the top," said Austria, who will rely on Salamero stars Jim Garrison, Jon Colina, Alex Nepha and Lester Alvarez.

The Tigers, mentored by Fatty Dandan, will feature an University of the Philippine standouts led by Magi Sison, as well as former La Salle cager Brian Heruela and 6-foot-5 Pil Ace Hash Anthony Jeffries.

Colina stunned the favored Alaska, 79-78, in Group B while Rain Or Ifsher Pipers edged the first Group A victory with a 78-72 triumph over PCA Gilas on the start of the pro league's farm tournament last Saturday.

The games of the tournaments, featuring 13 teams divided into two groups, will be televised on a delayed basis at 6 p.m. on NBC 33.

With Mayorga out, can Marquez be far behind?

BARE EYE

*Ricardo Tri*nidad

MORE THAN the bodily injuries Manolo Mayorga, in man-lifeguard Game who lead to take the ridiculously win—to send up to Money Pacquiao—to List Nigel on Sunday.

Mayorga could watch his big words outwith with, will manage inside the ring.

Tongue-in-cheek, seeming prophetic, Mayorga gave it all up after being decked in the 11th and final round.

The colorful Mayorga had been trumpeting he would use the Pacquiao power punches in stopping more of Pacquiao-Marquez bout.

• • •

There was no way he could.

Game...slanted, bloodied and snapped by Pacquiao in 2009—turned his bad forward two possible rematch with the Pacman.

Boxing professor Michael Manley was at ringside and offered his undivided view.

Manley said he doubted if Game, despite the dominant sales, would be able to avenge a revenge win against Pacquiao.

• • •

Manley, a Manila native has seen and known Rick a Pacquiao-Gates rematch should not be considered.

There was one point Manley was quite close about. He sounded fully convinced Game was not permanently wrecked by that gory 11th-round beatingin courtesy of Pacquiao.

• • •

It was Manley himself who tapped the boxing career of no less Game had to for helped me his first by ten guys as he trained the fight versus Baldiran in 1999.

"Mongolia will not have to attack and we want to catch them on the break," said Weiss. "We will be playing it safe. My team will not be pressured to score because only the conditions can cause damage to us."

Younghusband added: "They will need to score...so they will commit more once the second ball has given us more space."

"We expect them to come out strong, but if we hold down in the first half, I think we're going to be okay," said Borromeo.

• • •

Anyway, Baldiran coach admitted to not to mention to Mexico that he actually wanted to give Pacquiao another crack at Baldiran.

But in consideration that Pacquiao gave a certain Manley could guarantee which scooped the May 7 Las Vegas loss to his fame.

Of course, there are other people out there who doubted Manley's prediction that a third concluding fight will be necessary.

And forget about the gate sales, says Dapuran based newsman Jun Palanca.

He says just up a thing against the Bermuda the boxy would surely be a sellout, he argued.

Nobody is gonna bigger than the hometown Filipino thing-machine.

• • •

(BOOM to KO Gene Boo-Aquino just learned of Dapuran, regrets he won't be able to come over for his personal fix here on NBA Asiagate because of the Filipino identity. The coach, originally scheduled to Dabaguio, the boss called off suddenly—...It's a go today, at 2 p.m., at the Dabaguio Ng Mga Manunulat, Palanca Memorial Awards Literary Foundation Inc. Boo-Aquino will launch another collection of his sleeping Pharmacy Pinoy columns, "Pharmacy Pinoy 2," which is the 3rd Filipino free Press and Mail Asiagate's Asia-Philippines leader and editor in chief of Pinoy Reality, has resolved to follow up each one...No Pressure to Victory Hijo, Pipo de Pato.

ELIMOS ACES LAKAY: stars Eric Camus at Jason Ilagan (right) and Brad Cervantes of Far Eastern (right) and Jason Basketball League stalwart Rudy Lingganay (center) of the survivor of Mar.1 Rizal Super Cluster Series at the PBA D-League. The Series was also underscored by Abby Santos, Jun-Jun Calasicas and Rod Hagpatan.

By TOP CHOICE
At Santa Ana Park

NCA battle royale unfolds

THE NATIONAL Cadets Alliance (NCA) derby today presents a new another battle royale among top caddiegirls at the Tunnel Sports Arena in Daraj.

Participants in the derby, hosted by Jun Mendoza, Jun Tupaz is and the Pandy group, will be led by Ifsher World Championship winner Johnny Johnsford, Hipo Johnson, Agnes Gong, B. Tumbi, Jhanna Pineta, Boy Mendoza, Stella Ramsey, Arbon Manipon, Tony Cuenco, Rolando Bautista, Ginny Gonzalez Silks and Gen Dumpong.

The other favorites are Patrick Antonio, Tommy Oreo and Ouang dela Cruz, Gerry Ramos, Nene Medina, Elmer Sequenzeyas and Manny and Armand Santos.

The non-betting, corporate-sponsored NCA derby will be on March 23, to be hosted by Tony Jones and Danny and Joel Bravo.

Magic end 9-year Phoenix drought

NEW York Knicks' Chauncey Billups (left) grabs a rebound over Indiana Pacers' Darren Collison.

PHOENIX—Dwight Howard had 26 points and 23 rebounds, then watched the fourth quarter from the bench as the Orlando Magic completed a 111-88 rout of the Suns on Sunday for their first victory in Phoenix in nine seasons.

Phoenix had been the only NBA city where Howard had not won.

Aaron Brooks, starting in place of injured Steve Nash, had 19 points and 10 assists, but the Suns were blown out at home for the second game in a row.

Six other Magic players reached double figures, led by Hamdon-Haus outfit 17 and Gilbert Arenas with 15. Orlando's captains got plenty of rest heading into Monday night's game against the Lakers in Los Angeles.

Nash missed the game with "pelvic weakness." Coach Alvin Gentry said his star point guard probably also will miss Monday night's game at Houston.

In Boston, Ray Allen scored 17 points in just three quarters and Boston set a franchise record for fewest points allowed in the first eight games, beating the Milwaukee Bucks, 87-56.

OTHER RESULTS: Toronto 93, Cavaliers 73; Hornets 88, Sacramento Kings 106; Boston 87, Warriors 56; San Antonio 117

De La Salle swim captain, family perish in fire

JASMINE NICOLE Galela, team captain of the De La Salle women's swimming team, and three members of her family died in a fire that razed their house in Bacoor City yesterday. Page A23

Pacquiao in fine shape ahead of hard training

PACQUIAO

By Roy Luis Vi

TEAM PACQUIAO training camp opened yesterday with pound-for-pound king Manny Pacquiao hitting the road and doing some gym work in Baguio City.

The strongest congressman, who is making his World Boxing Organization welterweight crown's against Shane Mosley on May 7 in Las Vegas, jogged at the Burnham Park early in the morning and then rumbled the mitts for seven rounds with chief trainer Freddie Roach at the Cosmopan Hotel gym in the afternoon.

According to Filipino trainer Nonoy Neri, the fast-working boy was obvious for Pacquiao at the early division world champion had already done light training and physical conditioning in General Santos City.

Pacquiao also assumed it out at the People's Champ Gym in Hollywood.

"He [Manny] weighs between 132 and 132 pounds, which is his normal weight," said Neri, who is known to train both Pacquiao and Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez in their previous bouts.

Conditioning expert Alex Ariza is also in Baguio, where Pacquiao will train for four weeks until April 2, before he flies to Roach's Wild Card Gym in Hollywood for the second half of his preparation.

Pacquiao's line was sparring partners... super welterweight Shane's Porter and super lightweight David Rodela... are expected to arrive in Manila from the United States later next week.

Donaire, Mitsubishi Lancer outfest aims at PSA Forum

WBO #4SO featherweight champion Nonito Donaire Jr. and officials of the Mitsubishi Lancer International Auto Tennis Championship unveiled the eighth leg to today's PSA Forum at Shakey's SM Fairview in Manila.

Donaire will discuss his plans following his sensational second-round knockout of undisputed champion Fernando Montiel of Mexico.

Meanwhile, Philippine Rep. Eileen Ermita, also the president of the Philippine Tennis Association, will join Mitsubishi SIV for marketing and treasury Orlando Alvarez, first VP for vehicle sales Daniel Santos, VP for marketing services Jay Ilagan and advertising and PR manager Arlyn Hapin as they talk about the 22nd staging of the junior international tennis tournament in Manila.

Also included in the session are three-time GSW Search Radio PBA announcer Dyan Castillejo, Pagcor and Shakey's ace PSC commissioner Cilde Lizarga, the chef de mission for the Southeast Asian Games and rowing aficionado Gregorio Lamangan and the Tony Lamangan Bike Festival.

NGAP Visayas regional on

CAMILIANG STANDOUTS Paul Echarri and Migz Cobus headline a huge field vying all today in the National Golf Association of the Philippines' Visayas Regional Amateur championship at the Mactan Islander.

Echarri and Cobus, who helped the Sag-ay Rangers finish third in the recent Philippine Athletic Interclub in Cagayan de Oro, are two of the favorites in the 72-hole event presented by Pamalee Homer and SDC Land.

Up for grabs are three all-expense paid trips to Manila for the Philippine Amateurs next month for the top three finishers coming from the region.

Two slots will also be awarded to the lowest gross of the event starting tomorrow.

Int defends who won the Hinalmas Regional at Del Monte, bagged off from joining the tournament as he could play in the Inbalt Amateur slated later in the week.

The event, also backed by Great Depot, Calloway and Odyssey Golf and Mactan's, will be divided into big events for the 21 years old Cebus, a long-hitter who had his interclub debut at Pueblo de Oro last month.

Del Monte standout Jhonny Abuan Jr. also returned to Aklan and won a trip to Manila to play in the PGA Int, which the national Dyalo Mirabilis, his teammate at Del Monte, will be defending his national title.

Davis headlines Ultimate Golf today

MULTIPLE TOUR of Australasia and European Tour Order of Merit contender Roger Davis heads 16 Australian professional and amateur players seeing action in the Norway Pro-Am Ultimate Golf Challenge 2011 from today to Saturday at the Riverwalk Bluewater resort.

The 37-year-old Davis, who ranked among the world's top 10 between 1987 and 1992, is expected to top the pro division of the international circuit's kickoff leg.

Tim Ireland, founding director of the Sydney-based Ultimate Golf Challenge, said Norway was chosen as a venue because of its famed white-sand beaches and its challenging Graham Marsh-designed course.

The Challenge promotes exotic golf vacation around the world, according to Ireland, & Bluewater vice president for marketing Cito Villanueva.

GM Ian Cameron said the tournament is part of PAL's thrust in promoting the Philippines as a haven for golf and sports tourism.

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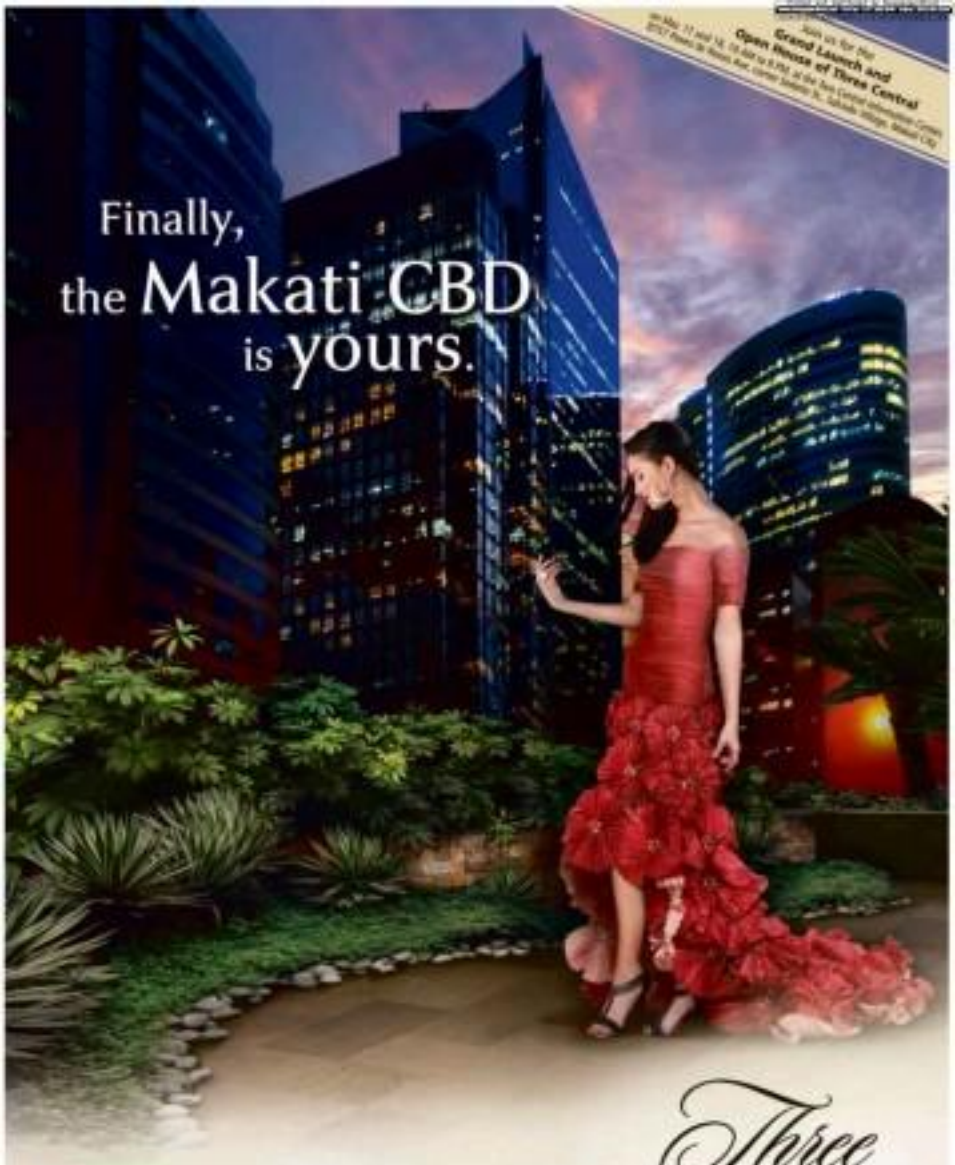

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DID YOU KNOW

NATIONAL Artist Victorino Edades, the "Father of Modern Art in the Philippines," was named a National Artist for Painting on March 27, 1973. Born on Dec. 23, 1899, his masterpiece "The Builders" became known as the first ever Modernist painting in the country. Rafael Bautista, Inquirer Research

PROBERS EYE ARSON ANGLE

Family of four killed in fire

By Julie M. Aurelio

IN THE face of inevitable death, a family of four turned to each other for strength and comfort.

A fire broke out in a house in a middle class neighborhood in Quezon City before dawn yesterday.

When it was finally placed under control more than an hour later, the occupants—Dr. Hans Sedilla, his wife Imran, both in their 50s; and their daughters, Jessica Nicole, 23; and Patricia Ann, 17—were found huddled together in the master bedroom on the second floor.

"The bodies were on top of one another as if they were trying to protect each other from the flames," said fire investigator SFO2 Felipe Arenas.

Sedilla was a cardiologist at St. Luke's Medical Center while his wife worked as a pediatrician before she decided to become a full-time housewife.

Jessica, according to a relative, was set to graduate with a degree in business management from De La Salle University while Patricia was a psychology student at the University of the Philippines.

Killed along with the Sedillas were their two housemaids, Lorilen de Leon, 30, and Imran de Leon, 27, were found just outside the master bedroom.

An initial investigation showed that the fire broke out at 2:55 a.m. yesterday while the family was sound asleep on their house at 36-A Maranong St. in Batasan Central.

Frantic calls for help

A maid living in a house in front of the victims' said she heard a woman's frantic calls for help at a few minutes past 3 a.m.

"I heard a woman's voice shout amidst the flames, 'Help! Fire! Help!' Then I heard something explode which turned out to be the frames was lowered by the victims. After that, there was silence," Milo Amigo told reporters in Filipino.

According to Arenas, the fire which reached the third alarm before it was put out at 4:08 a.m. may have started inside the garage where the van was parked, along with an Isuzu Trooper.

However, he said that they were still trying to determine how it began.

Prober SFO2 Rolando Alde said the victims failed to get out of their burning home because all the windows were barred with steel grills.

"The only way out was through the front gate" which, unfortunately, was blocked by the burning van, he said.

It theory that it was the van that first caught on fire due to faulty wiring was brushed aside by Hanna Alice Santos, the victims' family driver who was also Sedilla's cousin.

"The vehicles were both in good condition, we always had them checked," he said.

Neighbors, however, told fire probers that it was the Isuzu van that first caught on fire inside the garage.

Missing gas tank caps

Alde also noted that the gas covers of both vehicles were open while the gas caps were missing. As a result, he added, that they were looking at the possibility that the fire may have been deliberately set, using gasoline taken from the vehicles.

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Shoot-to-kill order for 5 fugitive Manila cops

By Jayvee T. Garcil

DESPERATE times call for desperate measures.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim has issued a shoot-to-kill order for five Manila Police District (MPD) policemen who have gone into hiding after they were linked to allegations that only P32 million was recovered from the P50.1 million ransom paid by a Malaysian kidnapping victim last month.

"Since the MPD is having a hard time finding the five police officers, I'm going to issue a shoot-to-kill order. It's a dominoes, but those people are criminal. They did not respect their friends," Lim said in a press conference yesterday.

"Their tendency will be to resist armed resistance so we have instructed police officers searching for them to protect themselves," he added.

Over the weekend, an investigation task force was created and was headed by Chief Supt. Peter Novicio, Police Officer 3 Jefferson Feliciano, Police Officer 3 Mike Carpio and Police Officer 1 Samuel Ocampo.

The trio failed to show up Friday morning following their subpoena from an inquiry at the MPD headquarters earlier. They were also not in their homes.

They are part of the team investigating the kidnapping of Malaysian businessman Tan Sieu Chie Yong who was abducted in Malabon City on March 8 and released the following day after paying a 916.3 million ransom.

After quickly arresting eight suspects, the five prosecuted only P4.2 million of the recovered ransom, although the suspects claimed the full amount was intact when it was confiscated from them.

The presumed the investigation of the five policemen.

Lim said Perfecto, in his memorandum to his former superior, MPD District 3 commander Senior Supt. Rolando Asuncion, the person under Senior Supt. Rolando Asuncion, the person under investigation is "presumed guilty" and that the investigation is "ongoing" and that the investigation is "ongoing" and that the investigation is "ongoing

Manila courts lose telephone lines over P1-M unpaid bills

By Jayneen T. Garrid

FOR the past two months, the phones at the different branches of the Manila Regional Trial Court (RTC) and the Office of the Clerk of Court have been silent.

The reason for this is that the Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT) Co. has cut the lifeline to RTC's 36 courts here after the city government's nonpayment of phone bills since March last year totaling almost P1 million.

However, Henry Galang, General Services Office (GSO) chief administrative officer at Manila City Hall, attributed the situation to the blunt.

In RTC's failure to submit vouchers for their phone bills in 2010.

He said they only learned last month that PLDT had disconnected the phone lines to the city's regional trial courts.

Galang added that the GSO immediately paid P900,000 to PLDT last week.

A court employee who refused to be named for lack of authority to speak to media admitted that the Manila RTC was to blame for the out-phone lines.

According to him, a key personnel retired in April last year and his replacement is apparently still learning the ropes.

While it is the city government that settles the bills with utilities companies on a monthly basis, it will not do so without receiving the processed bill vouchers from the offices, city treasurer officer in-charge Vicky Tuberos said in a phone interview.

"If we (had) received the vouchers, we would have released the money for the bills. Unlike me as a person," she told the Inquirer.

Galang said they were still negotiating with PLDT to reconnect the phone lines. The telecom company, however, claimed in a letter that the Manila RTC still owes P2.6 million in past overdue accounts.

THREE PLUS ONE
Three kids and their "friend" make themselves comfortable on a bench on Roxas Boulevard, Manila. ARNOLD ALMACEN

Cops chance upon Internet robbery; 1 dead

By Mike Frialde

POLICE officers patrolling a busy street in Makati City on Sunday night gunned down a man who tried to shoot his way out of a computer shop where customers he had just robbed of their cell phones.

Case investigator PO3 Nico Geronimo identified the fatality as Ronnie Bravo, 24, a resident of Paranaque City.

Initial investigation showed that policemen from the city police District 5 were on patrol on J. P. Rizal Street at 6:45 p.m. the other day when they noticed a black motorcycle parked in front of Dalimeva Internet Cafe in Barangay Bangkal.

Geronimo said PO2 Rafael Ingcan Jr. and PO2 Ben Matthew Ebuen Jr. called to alight from the police car to approach the driver to ask him why the motorcycle's plate number was covered in mud.

The man, however, transcribed by Red when he saw the approaching policemen, Geronimo added.

He further said that the man's action struck the policemen as suspicious and they decided to inspect the Internet shop.

At this point, Bravo came out. When he saw the policemen, he aimed a .38 cal. revolver at them but the weapon misfired at least twice, according to the investigator.

"There were still shots inside the chamber," Geronimo said.

The policemen, however, shot Bravo who fell to the ground.

Baby with liver disease needs P4M for surgery

JOH Tyron Feliciano was born on June 6 last year with biliary atresia, a serious and rare liver disease which affects newborn infants.

Compared to other babies his age, Joh's skin has a yellowish tint due to jaundice. His abdomen is swollen and his digestion is poor, making it hard for him to put on weight.

Doctors who have examined him have recommended that he undergo a liver transplant. The procedure, however, will cost P5 to P6 million at Chang Gung Memorial Hospital in Taiwan.

Joh's parents, Reynalda and Christian Feliciano, work as nurses. They are earning just enough for their basic needs as well as Joh's medication. Inquirer readers who wish to help them can call 0918-6384983, 0927-4138727, 497-6746 or send an e-mail to reynalda_bulilan@yahoo.com. Donations can also be deposited in Joh Tyron H. Feliciano's bank account with Banco de Oro account number 0360036754.

BABY JOB FELICIANO

METROBRIEFS

First batch of women drivers graduates

THE first batch of women bus drivers, or drivers the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has joined its hope of making the streets in the metropolis safe, will undergo another week-long training to prepare them before they hit the road. The 15 women were awarded certificates by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) yesterday morning. MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino and Tesda chief Joel Villanueva handed out the certificates to the women who had completed the intensive driving course conducted by Tesda. The graduates were led by their batch valedictorian, Yolanda Blanco, 43. "This will help me a lot as I am the family's breadwinner," said Blanco, a widow with three children. In an interview, Blanco said she returned to the country in 2008 after her husband passed away. She used to work in Abu Dhabi as a family driver. Tolentino said the completion of the driver's course for the first batch of the women drivers' program was only filling with Blanco being International Women's Month. He expressed gratitude to the four bus companies who "responded to the MMDA's call" to hire the women to become part of their fleet. "I hope we meet our target of 50 percent of the public utility vehicle driver workforce to be women," the MMDA chair said. "If we attain this, I'm certain that our roads will be safer." He added that another batch composed of 30 women would soon undergo training.

Mike Frialde

Heartbroken security guard kills self

A SECURITY watchman who could no longer bear the pain of breaking up with his wife killed himself inside an empty house at the subdivision where he was assigned yesterday morning. The body of Rolly Francisco, 33, was found in the yard of a house on Sta. Cecilia Street in Teero Villas Homes in Cainta City. Case investigator PO2 Eugene Fernandez of the Cainta City Police Station Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit said the victim was already dead when a neighbor found him. One of the last messages the victim sent to his children was: "Mahal kayo ng inyong ama. Di ako nagpapakita sa inyo kasi ayaw ko kayong makitang ganito ang itsura ng inyong ama. Sa mga anak ko, mahal ko kayo. Ikaw, Jay-Jay, ikaw na ang bahala sa mga kapatid mo. Ikaw ang panganay. Mahal kayo ng inyong ina. Ingat kayo palagi

Bahrain protests throw kingdom into chaos

MANAMA, Bahrain—Thousands of antigovernment protesters ran riot on Bahrain's financial center and drove back police trying to push them from the capital's central square—shaking the tiny island kingdom Sunday with the most disruptive protests since calls for more freedom erupted a month ago.

Demonstrators also clashed with security forces and government supporters on the campus of the main university in the Gulf country, the home of the United States Navy's Fifth Fleet.

The clashes in Bahrain fears that Bahrain's political crisis could be unwinding toward open sectarian conflict between the ruling minority Sunnis and Shiites, who account for 70 percent of the nation's 525,000 people.

In some neighborhoods, opposition set up checkpoints in trying to keep outsiders from entering. Bahrain's interior ministry warned Saturday that the "social fabric" of the nation was in peril.

Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa said the nation has "witnessed tragic events" during a month of unprecedented political unrest. But he insisted, "the right to security and safety is shared by all else."

"Any legitimate claims must not be made at the expense of security and stability," Salman said in a televised speech late Tuesday.

A day after visiting US Defense Secretary Robert Gates urged quick progress toward reform, thousands of protesters gathered before dawn to block King Hamad Highway, a nine-lane expressway leading to Bahrain's main financial district in downtown Manama, causing huge traffic chaos during morning rush hour and preventing many from reaching their offices on the first day of the work week.

"No one was able to go to work today. Thugs and protesters were blocking the highway," complained Sawsan Mohammed, 30, who works in the financial district. "I am typing these messages of rage and frustration to social media sites.

"I blame the protesters for what's happened in Bahrain today," said Lama Nasser, 25, who was caught in the traffic chaos and never made it to her office.

About three kilometers away, police at the same time moved in on Pearl Square, site of a month-long occupation by mostly members of Bahrain's Shiite majority calling for an elected government and equality with Bahrain's Sunnis.

Many protesters in recent days have pressed their demands further to call for the ouster of the Sunni dynasty that has ruled Bahrain for more than two centuries.

Witnesses said security forces surrounded the protesters' tent compound, shooting tear gas and rubber bullets in the air in the largest effort to clear the square since a deadly crackdown last month that left four dead.

Activists tried to stand their ground and chanted "Peaceful! peaceful!"

The assault swelled into thousands, with protesters streaming to the square to reinforce the activists' lines as police continued firing tear gas. By early afternoon, police pulled back from the square, witnesses said.

At Bahrain University, State demonstrators and government supporters held competing protests that descended into violence when pluralistic prayer turned into fighting. Witnesses said Sunni students blocking the campus made gain to seek refuge in classrooms and dorm halls, and Layla al-Sadi, an employee at the College of Arts.

Two protesters contained in critical head injuries and hundreds sought medical help, mostly with breathing problems from tear gas, hospital officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to reporters.

The Gulf island kingdom holds particular importance to Washington as the host of the Fifth Fleet, the main American military counterweight to Iran's efforts to expand its armed forces and reach into the Gulf.

The United States has observed Saudi to position itself as an attractive investment destination and Middle East banking center. Even the passport stamps issued to incoming visitors declare the kingdom as "Business Friendly Bahrain." AP

A BAHRAINI antigovernment protester defiantly brandishes the victory sign in front of riot police on an overpass on March 13 in Manama.

India now world's largest arms importer

NEW DELHI—At no time in past the club of international powers, India has reached another milestone...it's now the world's largest weapons importer.

A Swedish think tank that monitors global arms sales said Monday that India's weapons imports had overtaken China's, as the South Asian nation pushed ahead with its modernization of its military, content Beijing's influence and gain international clout.

"India has ambitions to become first a continental and then a regional power," said Rahul Bedi, a South Asia analyst with London-based Jane's Defense Weekly. "To become a big bag you need to project your power."

According to the report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India accounted for 9 percent of all international arms imports in the period from 2006 to 2010, and it is expected to keep the top spot for the foreseeable future.

"Just from what they have already ordered, we know that in the coming few years India will be the top importer," said Siemon Wezeman, a senior researcher at the institute.

Indian Defense Ministry spokesman Sitanshu Kar declined to comment on the report before he had a chance to read it.

China dropped to second place, with 6 percent of global imports, as it continued to build up its domestic arms industry, something India has so far failed to do, Wezeman said.

The United States was the largest arms exporter, followed by Russia and Germany according to the report.

The institute measures arms transactions over a five-year period to take into account the long time lag between order and delivery of arms.

India's government cannot avoid its rising concerns about China's regional power and its disputes over vital Indian Ocean shipping lanes, which flow to the east as part of its sphere of influence.

It is spending billions of dollars on fighter jets and aircraft carriers to modernize its air force and navy. Tensions also linger over unresolved border issues with China which led to war in 1962.

India also remains in its traditional faceoff with neighboring Pakistan, with which it has fought three wars.

With its booming economy and growing power, India has been pushing for a greater international role. AP

Thousands in Turkey protest press crackdown

ISTANBUL—Thousands of people marched in central Istanbul on Sunday to protest a crackdown on the press in Turkey as the arrest of more than a dozen journalists this month.

In the most prominent case, two investigative journalists, Nedim Sener and Ahmet Sik, were arrested on charges of involvement in a 2003 military-led plot to overthrow the pro-Islamic government.

Protesters chanted slogans like "Don't remain silent; the next might be you if you remain silent," "Hands off Nedim and Ahmet" and "Journalism is not a crime."

Critics of the crackdown say the arrests are an effort by pro-government officials in the judiciary and the security forces to silence critics of the governing Justice and Development Party.

Turkey aspires to join the European Union, and a recent report on Turkey's performance in the membership process harshly criticized journalists' arrests and a record high jail population. It ordered in 2009 against Dogan Media Group, which has been critical of the government.

"The high number of legal suits against journalists and undue pressure on the media undermine freedom of the press in practice," said the report, which was prepared by European Union officials.

With four months to go before a general election, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has rebuffed criticism and called the officials who prepared the report "ignorant of Turkey.

"There is no balance in this report," Erdogan said in a news conference last week. "The wording of this report does not reflect the press freedom in Turkey."

The government also denies claims by opponents that it has been working to silence rival critics through legal action and called on people to respect the investigations, which they describe as Turkey's confrontation with antidemocratic military practices.

Turkey is ranked 138th out of 178 countries in the "world press freedom index" issued by the Paris-based media group Reporters Without Borders.

Turkish officials say that there are 27 journalists in jail, all because of crimes unrelated to their journalistic activities. That is in stark contrast to a list compiled by the Turkish Journalists' Platform, a Turkish group, listing 68 journalists in jail on charges that it says violate freedom of expression, including publications.

The United States has also expressed concern over the recent reports on media suppression in Turkey and called for a transparent judicial process.

New York Times News Service

US official resigns after jabs at Pentagon

WASHINGTON—The State Department spokesperson, Philip J. Crowley, resigned Sunday, three days after publicly criticizing the Pentagon as "ridiculous and counterproductive and stupid" in its treatment of Pfc. Bradley E. Manning, the private in custody on charges of leaking classified government documents to the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks.

Crowley's comments, which were made to a small group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, echoed a political viewpoint by Democrats and were rejected by President Barack Obama as a news conference Fri. Jay Obama said the Pentagon had assured him that its procedures in Manning's confinement were "appropriate and are meeting our basic standards."

White House officials were humbled by the episode, administration officials said, which one official as "the last straw" in a series of frustrations created by Crowley. A retired Air Force officer, Crowley, 55, had a rocky career at the State Department, failing to establish clear ties to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In a one-paragraph statement, Clinton said this accepted Crowley's resignation with regret and praised him for his "deep devotion to public policy and public diplomacy."

Crowley, in his statement, did not retract his critical comments about the Pentagon, which he said "were intended to highlight the broader, even strategic impact of detainee actions undertaken by national security agencies every day and their impact on our global standing and leadership."

His remarks were first reported in a blog by a BBC correspondent, Phillips Thornton, who said Crowley had added that Manning deserved to be in jail.

Manning's lawyer has complained about his treatment, including restrictions being deprived of his clothing, as a maximum security prisoner under observation intended to prevent self-injury, even though his supporters said there was no evidence that he was suicidal.

New York Times News Service

CROWLEY

Malaysia says it caned some 30,000 foreigners

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia has said it caned nearly 30,000 foreigners since 2005, a weekly that drew condemnation Monday from rights groups who described the trial to the "barbaric" practice.

Amnesty International says that caning has hit epidemic proportions in Malaysia, where the beatings are administered with a long cloth that leaves permanent physical and mental scars.

Rights groups were outraged after it emerged that the government said in a statement to parliament last week that a total of 28,700 foreign workers were caned between 2005 and 2010 for various immigration offenses.

Thailand caning is a form of torture and ill-treatment against human beings because it causes physical suffering, psychological problems and constant trauma," Andika Abdul Phihdi from rights watchdog Suaram said in a statement.

"This form of barbaric punishment is prohibited" by international law he added.

Suaram said the foreign workers were usually picked up during large-scale crackdowns on illegal migrants. Malaysia is home to Asia's biggest migrant labor, with workers mostly coming from neighboring Indonesia.

London-based Amnesty also urged Malaysia to immediately halt judicial caning, which it described as "cruel, inhuman and degrading" for serious crimes including murder and rape, as well as for immigration violations.

"The government's figures confirm that Malaysia is actively punishing thousands of people to torture and suffering each year," said Sam Zarifi, Asia-Pacific director of Amnesty International.

"While most countries have abolished judicial caning, Malaysia has expanded the practice. Parliament has increased the number of offenses subject to caning to more than 60," the group said. AFP

Spanking 1-year-olds common among depressed dads

CHICAGO—Just like now moms, new fathers can be depressed, and a study found a surprising number of dad dads spanked their 1-year-olds.

About 40 percent of depressed fathers in a survey said they'd spanked kids that age, versus just 23 percent of fathers who weren't depressed. Most dads also had lower parenting skills and more negative responses to their children's doctor—a missed opportunity to get help, authors of the study said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and many child development experts warn against spanking children of any age. Other studies have shown that kids who are spanked are at risk of being physically abused and becoming aggressive themselves.

The researchers said spanking is especially troubling in children who are only 1, because they could get injured and they "are unlikely to understand the connection between their behavior and subsequent punishment."

The study was released online Monday by the journal Pediatrics.

The authors analyzed data on 1,746 fathers from a nationally representative survey in 10 large U.S. cities, conducted in 1998-2000. Lead author Dr. Neal Davis said that was the most recent comprehensive data on the subject, and he believes it is relevant today. Depression among fathers is strongly tied to unemployment rates, which are much higher now than a decade ago, he said.

The new study also examined about depressive symptoms, spanking and interactions with their 1-year-olds, but weren't asked why they spanked or whether it resulted in physical harm.

Overall, 7 percent of dads had experienced serious major depression.

Some likely had a history of depression, but in others it was probably tied to their children's birth, similar to postpartum depression in women, Davis said. A postpartum now with transcranial Healthcare in Murray Utah, Davis did the research while at the University of Michigan.

Postpartum depression is more common in women; he notes as many as 25 percent of them experience it, versus 10 percent of men.

CHRIS Hammond, 33, and his 1-year-old son Evan

Hammond, 33, of Ann Arbor, Mich., said he's definitely also childhood. Seven years have been linked with suicide and with drastic increases in the number of children including several high-profile drownings.

Less is known about depression in new dads and the study raises important awareness about an under-recognized problem, said Dr. Craig Garfield, an assistant pediatrics professor at Northwestern University and co-author of a pediatrics editorial.

With fathers increasingly spending time on child care, including taking their kids to routine doctor visits, it's important for pediatricians to pay attention to dads' mental health, Garfield said. Close to 90 percent of depressed and non-depressed dads in the study were with their child's mama, according to the study.

Davis said his office is working on screening dads for depression and offering referrals to mental health services—a practice he says is currently recommended by all pediatricians.

Chris Hammond, a New Jersey writer and stay-at-home dad with a 1-year-old son, says he read postpartum brochures the pediatrician gave his wife during one of her visits. He said his friend Jim will already answering yes to questions about symptoms.

Hammond said he'd never experienced depression, but starting from the time his son was a few months old, he began feeling overwhelmed. He developed trapped and resentful toward a baby who slept fitfully and had disrupted his life.

The 33-year-old father stressed that he loves his little boy, and has never spanked him, but says he felt the frustration that might lead others to do so. AP

OPEN AUCTION OF PRIME PROPERTIES

MARCH 30, 2011 | HOTEL INTERCON, MAKATI CITY
REGISTRATION STARTS AT 10:00 AM | AUCTION PROPER STARTS AT 11:00 AM

NOW WITH IMPROVED AUCTION GUIDELINES
SELLER TO SETTLE PROPERTY RELATED EXPENSES OWING AS AT AUCTION DATE

STARPROPERTIES invites all interested parties to bid the following properties on *"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"* basis:

METRO MANILA

★ COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

SCN-008 MRP : 12,000,000
COMMERCIAL CONDO UNIT — CALOOCAN CITY
Location: No. 41x14, Monumento Avenue, Monumento, Caloocan City
Lot Area: 553 sqm
Remarks: Frontage of 13.82 m along A. Bonifacio Ave. and narrow back of 11.98 m across Mercury Drug. Approximately 600 m from Monumento.

SUN-018 MRP : P17,600,000
COMMERCIAL LOT W/ WAREHOUSE — VALENZUELA CITY
Location: A. de Bonifacio cor. Rodolfo Sts., Brgy. 98-I, Caloocan, Caloocan City
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
Floor Area: 161 sqm
Remarks: About 100 m away from Rizal Ave. Exit and some 600 m from the LRT-1/MRT-3 Monumento.

SMN-014 MRP : 39,360,000
COMMERCIAL CONDO — MANILA
Location: The Empire Place Condo, Brgy. Wack-Wack along Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Floor Area: 243 sqm (1 unit, 4-levels / 194 sqm (1 parking slots)
Remarks: Mandaluyong Academy of Subic. About 50 m SM from the cor. of Boni Ave. & Mauway Sts.

SMN-0208 MRP : 31,400,000
COMMERCIAL BUILDING W/ LOT — MANDALUYONG CITY
Location: Along Calle Industria, Pasig-Marikina Industrial Park, Pinagbuhatan, Pasig
Lot Area: 4,500 sqm
Remarks: 3-unit 3-SM of concrete bldg., 30-m ROW from Ortigas Ave. Extension. Approximately 2 km from Ortigas Center and Shaw Blvd.

★ INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY

SB-872 MRP : P13,700,000
INDUSTRIAL LOT/S (E) — PATEROS
Location: No. 200 M. Almeda St. & No. 518 Florida St. (fka Floreto) Bulacan, Pateros
Lot Area: 2,087 sqm
Remarks: Almost 130 m SM from the cor. of M. Concepcion Ave. & Florida (fka Floreto) back portion

★ MIXED-USE PROPERTIES

SCR-010 MRP : P6,772,000
COMMERCIAL LOT W/ (E) — QUEZON CITY
Location: No. 2 Mahusay St., Mariana Village, Quezon City
Lot Area: 300 sqm
Floor Area: 300 sqm
Remarks: Adjacent to Mariana Commercial Bldg., about 200 m SM of Quirino Highway and some 200 m NE of the Amoranto Jr. Link Sts.

ECR-0121 MRP : P28,800,000
COMMERCIAL LOT W/ (E) — QUEZON CITY
Location: Brgy. Pinagkaisahan, Tandang Sora, Quezon City
Lot Area: 7,200 sqm
Remarks: 80 Linear. of Rivera Ln. and 40 Linear. About 80 m from Tandang Sora Avenue. Approximately 200 m SM from Quirino Highway & 1.2 KM NW from Luzon Avenue.

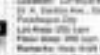
★ RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

SB-434 MRP : P8,380,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT — SUCOR CITY
Location: Lot 21 Blk 9-D Tarlac St. Block 9, Sitio Tabangi, Brgy. Sucor, Muntinlupa City
Lot Area: 1,079 sqm
Remarks: About 20 m from the cor. of Tarlac St. & Sitio Tabangi. Approximately 1.5 km from Sucor Elementary School and some 1.2 km from Sucor Station (LRT Station)

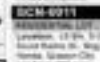
SMN-004 to 0154 MRP : P7,500,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (M) — ANTIPOLO
Location: Mina Vista Subdivision, Brgy. San Luis, Antipolo
Lot Area: 120 sqm
Remarks: About 600 m north from the cor. of Municipal Road and Marigold St. and about 1.2 km from the Brgy. San Luis Elementary School. A total of 36 lots for sale.

SB-442 MRP : P8,800,000
RESIDENTIAL CONDO UNIT — MAKATI CITY
Location: Unit 8-501 Tower Suites II, Kalayaan cor. Gallardo St., Makati City
Floor Area: 45.5 sqm
Remarks: Near Makati Poblacion, South Park Estates, Makati High School, Asian Hospital, Millennium Place, Jupiter Area and The Fronts Park Mall.

SUN-015 MRP : P9,900,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT W/ WAREHOUSE — CALOOCAN CITY
Location: Lot 10-B-1-1-1111, D. A. Bautista Ave., San Antonio Paradahan City
Lot Area: 250 sqm
Floor Area: 250 sqm
Remarks: Near Mall Pasaje, Inc. located along the main road of an area West-bound to LO Pinoy Compound

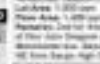


SCN-0011 MRP : P12,700,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT — CALOOCAN CITY
Location: Lot 24, S-12, Sc. St. Social Realty St., Brgy. Legaspi Homes, Caloocan City
Lot Area: 600 sqm
Floor Area: 600 sqm
Remarks: About 150 m south from the cor. of Legaspi Homes & Social Realty Drive. Frontage is about 20 m road among those fronting the 4 is depth of 30 m.

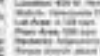


SBM-020 MRP : P13,900,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT W/ WAREHOUSE — QUEZON CITY
Location: Lot 23 Blk 3 Bonifacio Industrial Subd., Brgy. Obrero, Novaliches, Quezon City
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
Floor Area: 1,400 sqm
Remarks: 2nd lot from the cor. of Phil. Rabbit Bus Line Inc. & Bonifacio Ave. About 600 m to NE from Sangu High School

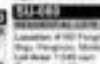
SB-911 MRP : P12,396,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (E) W/ IMPT/S — MALABON CITY
Location: 424 M. Hernandez St., Muzon, Tinajeros, Malabon City
Lot Area: 1,128 sqm
Floor Area: 500 sqm
Remarks: Approximately 1 km SM from McArthur Hiway and about 3.5 km NW from Valenzuela City Hall



SU-469 MRP : P12,936,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (E) W/ IMPT/S — MALABON CITY
Location: #160 Feliciano Road, Brgy. Hulo, Mandaluyong City
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
Floor Area: 100 sqm
Remarks: Near Bonifacio Andres Hernan, Pinagkaisahan High School, Tandang Sora High School, Sacred College and Kaggawarangan



SB-467 MRP : P10,900,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (E) W/ IMPT/S — MALABON CITY
Location: No. 84 Caterina Road, Cubao, Quezon City
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
Floor Area: 1,715 sqm
Remarks: Mid-to-front the lot cor. of Dean Ann and Sgt. Cabrera St., all of 66 m of frontage along Dean Ann, and 400 m N.E. of Gaygayan Bus. Terminal along EDSA

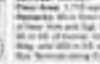


LUZON

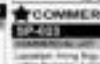
★ COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

SP-423 MRP : P 900,000
COMMERCIAL LOT — BALANGA, BATAAN
Location: Along Brgy. road within Barangay Alubang, Bombay, Bataan
Lot Area: 5,121 sqm
Remarks: Located 1 km. from Hermosa, Bataan, Poblacion Village and Mariveles Village.

SBN-0218 MRP : 13,800,000
COMMERCIAL LOT/S (E) W/ IMPT/S — LIPA, BATANGAS
Location: Along Provincial road, Inalang, Lipa City, Batangas
Lot Area: 750 sqm
Floor Area: 1,000 sqm
Remarks: Currently the site of Mang's Sundeck. About 100 m south from Lipa City Hall and approximately 4 KM NE from SM Lipa City



SBN-0247 MRP : 10,213,800
COMMERCIAL LOT/S (E) W/ IMPT/S — LIPA, BATANGAS
Location: Sitio M. Roxas, Brgy. Sabang, Lipa City, Batangas
Lot Area: 760 sqm
Floor Area: 1,000 sqm
Remarks: Currently the site of Mac-Hondo. About 5 m N. of Sabang Elementary School. Approximately 2 km SE from Ayala Land Inc. Calabarzon Tax Declaration



★ INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES

SP-018 MRP : 57,908,000
INDUSTRIAL LOT/S (E) — BALAYAN, BATANGAS
Location: Brgy. Sampaguita, Sitio Bernal, Carmona, Balayan
Lot Area: 5,150 sqm
Remarks: 2.5 KM. NW of Carmona's Dock within Brgy. Bernal. Near Inter-Island Boat Terminal, Brgy. Sampaguita, Balayan, Batangas

SP-610 MRP : P40,000,000
COMMERCIAL LOT/S (VACANT) — LUCENA
Location: Sta. Domingo Road, Brgy. Cotgon, Mulanay, Laguna
Lot Area: 23,644 sqm
Remarks: Approximately 33 km. from Western Bicentennial Road, Near Gulod Baka Office. Shell Industrial Park, Mulanay Exit. Approximately 5 km. from Lucena City.

★ MIXED-USE PROPERTIES

SP-863 MRP : P 710,000
COMMERCIAL LOT/S (E) — MAGDALENA, LAGUNA
Location: Nelmo Mansionary Subang, Famoscan, Magdalena
Lot Area: 116 sqm
Remarks: Approximately 30 km. from Sta. Cruz, Laguna. About 50 m NW of the exit 200 along NAIA Highway and 600 m SW of Pasco.

SUN-021 MRP : P 700,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (E) W/ IMPT/S — CALOOCAN
Location: Along National Road, Brgy. Pangao, Binalbag, Lal Island
Lot Area: 1,000 sqm
Floor Area: 1,000 sqm
Remarks: About 500 m NE from Pangao Elem. School. Some 2 km from Nasugbu Poblacion and about 2 km north from Barang Municipal Hall

SBN-016 MRP : 9,000,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT — BALAYAN, BATANGAS
Location: Lot 1-A, Apacible Highway, Lot 1-B, Apacible St. San Vicente II, Brgy. Caylaki
Lot Area: 0.021 sqm
Remarks: Cor. of Sec. II, Apacible Highway & Apacible St. Some 50 m from NE of the Riviera Hall and Dining Hall

SP-340 MRP : P23,750,000
MIXED-USE LOT — CALAMBA, LAGUNA
Location: Lot 2-B, Nat'l. Hiway, Brgy. Parian, Calamba, Laguna
Lot Area: 7,596 sqm
Remarks: Lot along south side of National Rd. and approximately 50 km. from Laguna's Supermarket and Hall's Store. San Epifanio Church and Ayala Subdivision are some 2 km. away. and SM Calamba is about 5 km. away.

SB-341 & 342 MRP : P54,800,000
MIXED-USE LOT — CALAMBA, LAGUNA
Location: Lot 2-C-4, Nat'l. Highway, Parian, Calamba, Laguna
Lot Area: 17,226 sqm
Remarks: Lot on the wrong south side of National Rd. and entrance to the main subdivision and Hall's Store. San Epifanio Church, La Fuente Subdivision and SM Bldg. and SM Calamba branch.

SP-913 MRP : 28,700,000
MIXED-USE LOT/S (E) — CALAUAN, LAGUNA
Location: Calauan-Victoria Road, Poblacion, Calauan
Lot Area: 4,170 sqm
Remarks: Near Calauan Public Market, Puregold Market, Victoria Public Market, Victoria Port, Victoria Rural Bank, Victoria Water District, Victoria Municipal Hall, Victoria Police Station and Victoria Fire Station. Approximately 2 km. south from the entrance of Canlubang Sports Resort.

★ RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

SP-248 MRP : P9,630,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (M) — BALAYAN
Location: Diamond Villa Subd., Barangay Caloocan, Balayan
Lot Area: 10,822 sqm
Remarks: Adjacent to the Balayan Maharlika Children's Hospital. About 100 m from the main entrance of Sto. Nino Cemetery and 200 m from Dimagiba Elem. School

SB-304 MRP : 18,830,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT — MAGALLANES CITY
Location: Lot 1220-B-1 Lapaz Drive, Hungay, Sagaba City
Lot Area: 0.268 sqm
Remarks: Located on the 10th Lot in Lapaz Drive and some 2 km. of Hollycrest Golf Meadows and is about 300 m SW from Bella Trail

SB-008A MRP : P15,488,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT — BALAYAN
Location: Sto. Cielo Country Estate Subd., Sta. Rita, Balayan, Batangas
Lot Area: 24,535 sqm
Remarks: Terrain of the land is generally flat. About 4 km SE from McArthur Highway and approximately 1.7 km SE from M-13 Sta. Rita Interchange

SB-308B MRP : P13,038,800
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (E) — BALAYAN
Location: Sto. Cielo Country Estate Subd., Sta. Rita, Balayan, Batangas
Lot Area: 14,004 sqm
Remarks: Terrain of the land is generally flat. About 4 km SE from McArthur Highway and approximately 1.7 km SE from M-13 Sta. Rita Interchange

SCR-09108 MRP : P22,680,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (VAC) — QUEZON CITY
Location: Fairmont project, Brgy. 44-E, Caloocan, Lalaig 1(A), Bocia Santa
Lot Area: 120 sqm
Remarks: Across Fairmont Capital Learning Center, approximately 800 m from Northwestern University and Tuba Airport Road

SP-109 MRP : 37,908,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (VACANT) — LAGUNA
Location: Sitio Gulod Kubo, Barangay Lucsuhin, Bauan
Lot Area: 60,566 sqm
Remarks: Near Golden Hills Subdivision, Bauan Elementary School, Bauan Comprehensive High School, Bauan Technical School, Bauan Public Market and Bauan Municipal Hall

★ AGRICULTURAL PROPERTIES

SB-347 MRP : P 728,000
AGRICULTURAL LOT/S (E) — BATANGAS
Location: Ibaan Brgy. Bekal, Ibaan, Batangas
Lot Area: 2,000 sqm
Remarks: Property lies with Bekal, Ibaan Aland. 350 m SE of the National Road. 1.5 km. of Ibaan Bridge, and about 600 m. from Bekal Elementary School.

SB-318 MRP : P8,680,000
AGRICULTURAL LOT/S (E) — BATANGAS
Location: Lot 6, Nat'l. Highway, Ambas-Ambas, Sulok, Dolores, Quezon
Lot Area: 2,410 sqm
Remarks: Lot on the inside side. About 50 m NW of New Ambas-Ambas Processing Center, some 2KM. in city of Tayabas and some 2 km. from Sulok Elementary School

SP-308 & 307 MRP : 8,680,000
AGRICULTURAL LOT/S (E) — BATANGAS
Location: Along NPC, near Kamuning Bakeshop, Pinagtong, Ibaan, Batangas
Lot Area: 671, 104 sqm
Remarks: Near Tayabas Electric Power Plant and Mariano Elementary School

SB-317 MRP : 11,620,000
AGRICULTURAL LOT/S (E) — TAYABAS, QUEZON
Location: Sitio Inalagan, Brgy. Lalo, Tayabas, Quezon
Lot Area: 21,0370 sqm
Remarks: Ambala landmark. Near Lalo Elementary School. Beach and Lucsuhin Bay Resort. Approximately 4 km. NE from the entrance gate of Dalahican Bay Resort.

MINDANAO

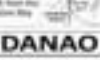
★ COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

SU-259 MRP : 28,370,000
COMMERCIAL LOT W/ IMPT/S — BUTUAN CITY
Location: Lot 6, Poblacion Rd., Barangay, Ambay, Butuan City
Lot Area: 2,803 sqm
Floor Area: 3,364 sqm
Remarks: Across the Pajimot-Dada Bros. Gasoline Station, Inc. and some 2 km. from the Butuan City Hall. Approximately 1 km. from Butuan Doctors' Hospital and Butuan Medical Center.

SU-264 MRP : 44,810,000
COMMERCIAL LOT W/ IMPT/S — BUTUAN CITY
Location: Lot 21 Diamond Rd., Barangay Ambago, Butuan City
Lot Area: 1,625 sqm
Floor Area: 4,000 sqm
Remarks: Corner site of Diamond Rd. and Bonifacio St. Near Bonifacio Drive Hotel and Golden Heights Garden Village

★ MIXED-USE PROPERTY

SU-308 MRP : 8,348,000
MIXED-USE LOT — BUTUAN CITY
Location: Lot 1, Blk 1, Pajimot-Dada Bros. Gasoline Station, Inc. Subd., Tagabinet, Butuan City
Lot Area: 54,000 sqm
Floor Area: 523 sqm
Remarks: Across the Pajimot-Dada Bros. Gasoline Station, Inc. and some 2 km. from the Butuan City Hall. Approximately 1 km. from Butuan Doctors' Hospital and Butuan Medical Center.



★ RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

SU-218 MRP : 90,280,000
RESIDENTIAL LOT/S (VAC) — BUTUAN CITY
Location: Sitio Kinabuhi-Pangi, Dagan, Ong
Lot Area: 677,661 sqm
Remarks: Northern portion of Nasipit-Butuan Road. A segment of the Asia Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Tower is within the property. Approximately 2 km. NE of the Nasipit Poblacion and some 1 km. to the intersection of Diamond Rd and Langa Rd.

★ AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY

SU-181 MRP : 16,250,000
AGRICULTURAL LOT/S (E) — DAVAO CITY
Location: Riverside Beach Rd., Brgy. Pedada, Tagum City
Lot Area: 14,602 sqm
Remarks: Beside Villa Ocean View Beach Resort. Villa Ocean View Resort, Dona Vicenta Subd., Don P. Dayo Elem. School, Pedada Beach Resort.

PROPERTIES WITH CONSOLIDATED TITLES

- Sitio Kinabuhi – 7.05 of the Property will have to be consolidated by the Auction participant to the Selling Entity on or before last March 30, 2011. Consolidation of titles will be undertaken by the Selling Entity at the expense of the Auction participant/buyer, as mandated by the Selling Entity.
- 20% of the Selling Price of the Property will be paid by the Auction participant/buyer to the Selling Entity as a Downpayment Deposit upon signing of the Contract to Sell.
- Balance of the Selling Price – must be paid on or before last May 30, 2011.

PROPERTIES WITH ENCUMBRANCES/LIENS

- Sitio Kinabuhi – 2.65 of the Property will have to be consolidated by the Auction participant to the Selling Entity on or before last March 30, 2011. Consolidation of titles will be undertaken by the Selling Entity at the expense of the Auction participant/buyer, as mandated by the Selling Entity.
- 20% of the Selling Price of the Property will be paid by the Auction participant/buyer to the Selling Entity as a Downpayment Deposit upon signing of the Contract to Sell.
- Balance of the Selling Price – must be paid on or before last May 30, 2011.
- Barangay – 5% of the Selling Price will be paid on or before last May 30, 2011.
- Banner – 5% of the Selling Price payable within seven (7) calendar days from award thereof. Check to be made in the name of the Selling Entity.

PROPERTY RELATED EXPENSES: All applicable property related expenses (including documentary taxes and real estate taxes) pertaining to the property in question to be paid, prior to settlement by Seller, as specified in the Auction Guidelines.

CONTACT NOS.

SMART:	0920-911-7326 / 0919-777-9111
GLOBE:	0917-811-7326 / 0915-777-9111
SUN:	0922-811-7326 / 0922-777-9111
CELLCOM:	0921-811-7326 / 0921-777-9111
FLASH:	0923-811-7326 / 0923-777-9111
GLOBE:	0917-811-7326 / 0915-777-9111
SMART:	0920-911-7326 / 0919-777-9111
GLOBE:	0917-811-7326 / 0915-777-9111
SUN:	0922-811-7326 / 0922-777-9111
SMART:	0920-911-7326 / 0919-777-9111
GLOBE:	0917-811-7326 / 0915-777-9111
SUN:	0922-811-7326 / 0922-777-9111
SMART:	0920-911-7326 / 0919-777-9111
GLOBE:	0917-811-7326 / 0915-777-9111
SUN:	0922-811-7326 / 0922-777-9111
SMART:	0920-911-7326 / 0919-777-9111
GLOBE:	0917-811-7326 / 0915-777-9111
SUN:	0922-811-7326 / 0922-777-9111

DISCLAIMER: Titles of properties are under third-party's name or under corporate names. Photographs of the properties posted are therefore posted to show the lay, physical and legal conditions of the property. Visible maps are only those areas are approximates only. Property boundaries are not surveyed and may not be accurate. Properties are sold on an "as-is-where-is" basis. Properties are subject to change without prior notice. The Seller reserves the right to add and not any property anytime. Change in prices are subject to the sole discretion of the Seller.

PLANITAGE
Electronic Copyboard

PHILCOPY

The WORLD

Lira Lorena B. Dulce

need a job?

Libya rebels vow to stand or die

Gadhafi planes bomb key town

AJDABIYA, Libya—Military forces loyal to Moammar Gadhafi sent warplanes Monday to bomb this anxious town, a strategic linchpin on the doorstep of the opposition capital Benghazi and within grasp of a highway crucial to recapturing the eastern border and encircling the rebellion with heavy armor and artillery.

At least two explosions were heard but there was no immediate word on casualties among rebel fighters coordinating the air supremacy which Gadhafi's forces have used to drive resistance and intimidate their adversaries as they advance eastward to restore the country's bloody uprising.

After another day of headlong retreat, this time from the refinery and port at Brega, one town west of here, the rebels appeared for what some called a last stand at Ajdabiya, taking refuge in military barracks where they stacked ammunition boxes on deep, positioned a handful of tanks and tried to bring order to a jumble of small artillery and armored cars. Bulldozers built berms 3 feet high near a pair of green, metal arches that mark the town's entrance.

Decisive in uprising

The fate of Ajdabiya, an eastern town of 120,000 near the Mediterranean coast, may prove decisive in the most violent and chaotic of the uprisings that have upended the Arab world. Under a sky turned gray by a morning sandstorm, the rebels valiantly vowed victory but acknowledged the deficit posed by their weapons and pleaded for a no-flight zone that seemed a metaphor for any kind of international help.

"Our survival is a cliche," said Iyad Tawp, 29, a civil engineer turned fighter, at Ajdabiya's entrance. "We can wait until they impose a no-flight zone. If they don't, what can we do, my friend? We fight and die. God is with us, God willing."

From its certain beginning, Libya's uprising has taken a darker turn, as Gadhafi's forces have recaptured Zawiyah, near Tripoli, and are now besieging Misurata, a commercial capital and an oasis of rebel control in the west. Officials in Tripoli talk with chutzpah, and a tense calm mood has settled over Benghazi, whose reports of bombardment grow.

The United Nations Security Council this week may take up an Arab League call for a no-fly zone over Libya, a decision that Gadhafi's government on Sunday deemed an "unexpected departure" from the league's charter. The foreign ministers of major industrial nations are expected to consider the topic at a meeting in Paris on Monday. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is to fly on to Egypt and Tunisia afterward, and is expected to meet with Libyan opposition leaders.

But of one line that shifted eastward by the day and plunging missile lines threatened to outpace a decision that still faces opposition from Russia and China and lacks the clear support of the United States and Europe.

Reality on ground

The debate abroad overshadowed the stark reality on the ground—planes drone here not defended the rebels, but inflict a relentless onslaught of tanks, artillery, helicopters and ships at sea has not rebels battling back the past several days from a series of oil towns along Libya's virtually indefensible coastal plain.

As the front, plans for foreign help have grown by the day. From domestic for a no-flight zone to growing calls for the arming of Libyan ships at sea, military bases and Rafal Ashdya, the compound in Tripoli that serves as Gadhafi's headquarters.

"We demand intervention from America, from Britain, from France!" shouted Wanis Rayhani, 42, a fighter waiting in a pushed Toyota pickup near the front. "I personally want them to send troops from abroad to stop this dictator. I swear to God almighty!"

"No, no, that won't work!" another fighter shouted.

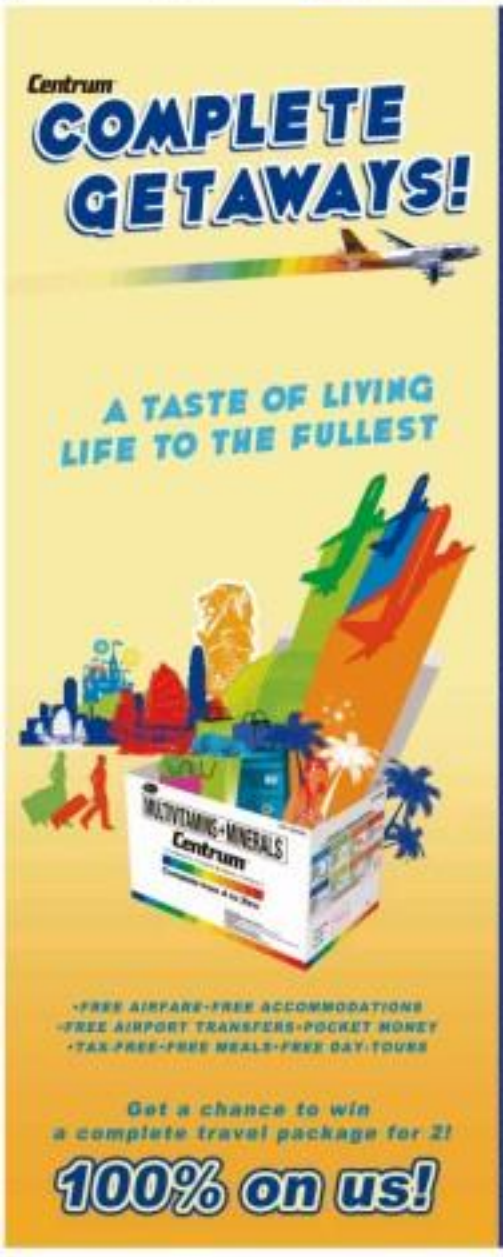
"Whatever it takes," Rayhani replied.

Libya's former interior minister, Gen. Abdel Fatah Younis, appeared unexpectedly before reporters in Benghazi on Sunday evening in his role as the new head of the rebel army and promised a vigorous defense of Ajdabiya, calling it a "key" city.

Once a close ally of Gadhafi and head of the country's special forces, Younis resigned "to be part in his followers to join the rebels. He said that he had spent days at the front lines and acknowledged that opposition fighters had overextended. They advanced "too far, too fast and did not protect the areas they gained," he said.

Striking an optimistic note, though, he said: "But we thanks to our resistance.

"War is a matter of advance and tactical withdrawal," he said. "What we are trying to do is lure him into an area where we can ensure the fight." New York Times News Service



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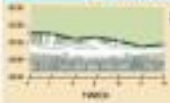
BUSINESS

Remittance growth to slow down this year

INDICATORS



PESO-DOLLAR RATE
March 14, 2011
43.590

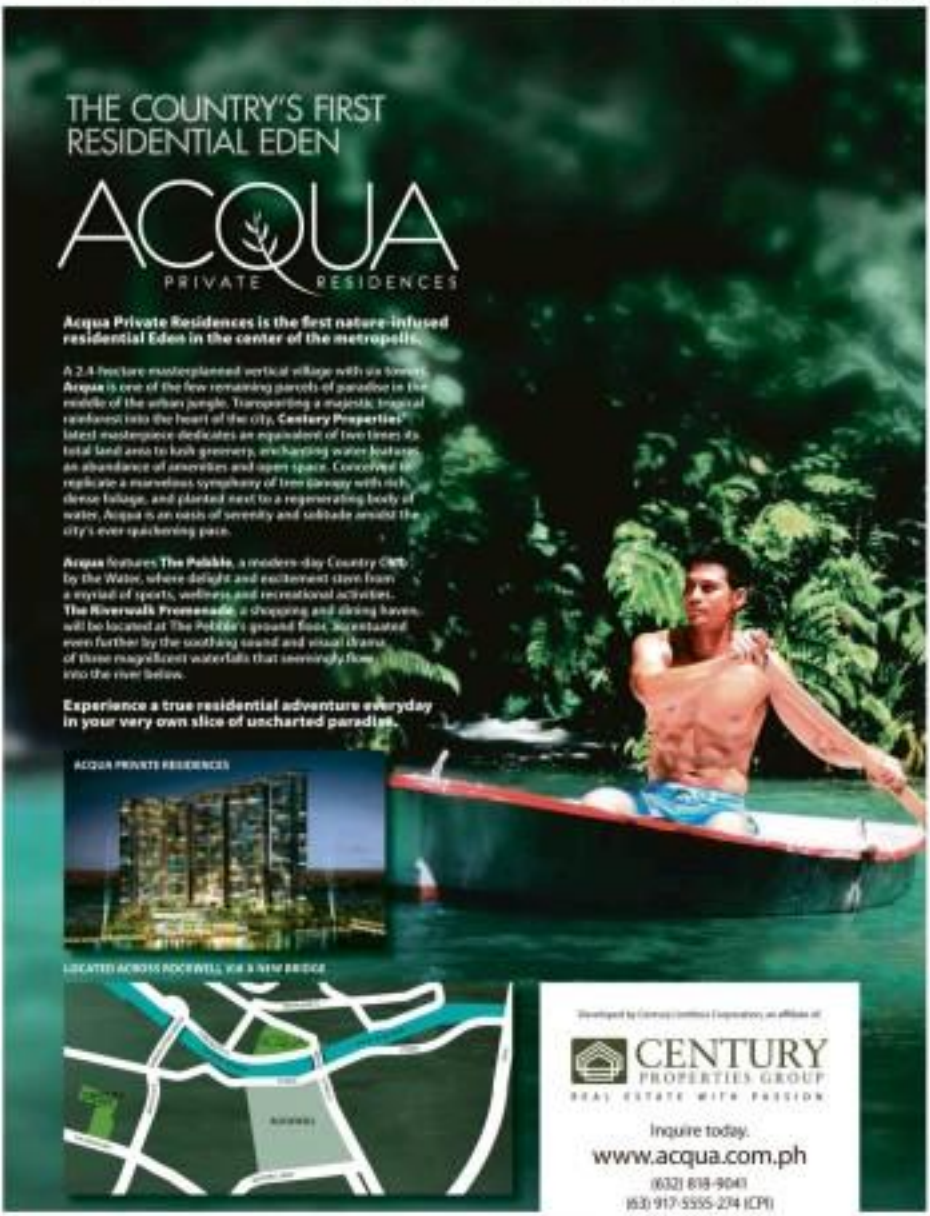
BSP notes lost jobs due to Mideast unrest, Japan crisis

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday hinted that it might slash its remittance growth forecast of 8 percent for this year to take into account the impact of recent external developments—the unrest in the Middle East and North Africa and the disaster that hit Japan last week—on the ability of Filipino workers abroad to send money.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the central bank would review its projections on remittances, which could also result in the adjustment of the monetary authority's forecast on the balance of payments. The central bank set its BOP forecast for this year at a surplus of between $6 billion

GO TO PAGE B2



Remittance
From page B1
end $8 billion.

"We will consider all the risks and uncertainty that we have on both revenue and future trends as we start the operating environment," Tolentino told reporters.

BSP officials earlier said money sent by overseas Filipinos was likely to sustain the 8 percent growth posted last year despite fears of uncertainties in the global economy.

For instance, the US economy, which rebounded modestly last year from the recession in 2009, was seen to continue recovering this year and at a more significant pace. Continually growing economies of alternative labor markets have also been boosting demand for Filipino labor.

However, the unexpected upside of political unrest in some North Africans and Middle Eastern countries that started last month was feared to dampen remittances as many OFWs based in countries in those regions have left their jobs.

Foreign buying trims early stock trade losses

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL STOCKS opened lower yesterday due to ripples from the devastating earthquake in Japan, but heavy bargain hunting by foreign investors trimmed overall losses.

The main-them Philippine Stock Exchange index slipped 5.68 points or 0.14 percent to 3,939.79.

But Asensi Capital Equities said the market "overcame a poor start that pulled the index 36 points lower at the open, apparently fueling the aftershocks of the quake that shook southwestern Japan last week."

The day's losses were tempered by the late gains posted by the industrial, holding firms and mining/oil counters. On the other hand, the financial, property and services counters led the losers of the session.

Value turnover stood at P5.21 billion, with 66 decliners narrowly edging out 53 advancers. There were P2 billion in net foreign buying that supported fund equities despite the fallout from Japan.

The trades that fell in heavy volume were Atlantic Equity Alcantara, Metrobank, PSE, Atlantic Pacific Syndicate, Megaworld, Cebu Air, RCBC and Southeast Asia Cement. ALI, SMC, SM Investments, First Gen, BDO, Ayala, First Holdings, Banco de Oro, Meralco and Vista Land finished the downtrend.

"The market is obviously still trying to assess the impact of Japan's recent natural disaster in the past one period," Asensi Capital said.

Bad news won't matter soon

MARKET ADVISORIES over the weekend were of the view that stocks might sink further when trading resumed this week.

The logic: disaster that hit Japan last Friday along with our own market performance last Friday, has certainly weighed heavily on this forecast.

While this forecast has an impact on our risk exposure, what I think is more relevant in order to stay ahead is to be able to see now whether bad news will continue to dictate market direction in the face of overall market conditions where good news are simultaneously unfolding as well.

It is my feeling that while bad news go after big market sentiments at the moment, it will not be for long that bad news still have their balance from good news in the market's overall direction.

MARKET RIDER

Dave Ventura

Major direction

On January 11 and the market might hit 3,500 and market in general trading recommendation to continue selling your market positions. My principal reason was on the basis of my observation that the market had been on a downward trend since November last year.

I continued to recommend this trading strategy until a week before my upcoming birth, 22 articles subject. I made a "sell" reversal to "subjective buy" because, as I claimed then, the market may have hit bottom. And if it had not, it was because it was very near bottom. I even made a list of recommended stocks to buy in my follow up articles. At that time, the market was trading at the 3,800 level.

As a result, I got some misdirections, especially on that particular Monday morning on February 22, the market was weak and threatening to fall further. The market followed as it did. However, it did not fall low enough that most of my stock picks to the "selective buy" list maintained their original prices and the market did not break 3,700 – the market's low to date.

Like I thought on last Feb 22, the market was near bottom, and as it turned out, the market bottomed out a few days later. Therefore, while stock prices may persist to stumble some weeks near this week, I believe that they are very temporary. Following the bottom-line guided recommendation on Feb. 22 that the market then had hit bottom or was near bottom, it appears that the market is recommending to the bull market momentum started on the bush as two years ago.

Bottom line quiz

This reminds me of the difficulty that even institutions experience in understanding or in defining what exactly a bull market is. If prices are on the rise, does this mean that we already have a bull market? Are there precise reminders/criteria that must be met for a market to be called a bull market?

Is this the same as what is called a bull run? What is a bear market? Why do we call markets as either of these terms?

Searching for new and more precise definitions, I found nothing. First, the use of the terms "bull" or "bear" to describe market conditions in the stock market emanated from the way Americans behave to fight. Accordingly, "a bull thrusts its horns up into the air while a bear swipes its paws down." Therefore, if the market constantly swings up, it's then called a bull market. If the market trend is down, it's then called a bear market.

Second, a "bull market" already exists as early as when stock prices are expected to rise in view of investors' general optimism, confidence and expectations that favorable market conditions will continue. Third, a "bull market" is surely in progress when stock prices are already rising.

Come to think of it, the market index had climbed back over the 3,800 level or so a few days after Feb. 22. However, in that given up some hundred points up to last Friday when it closed at 3,934.35.

That, despite the market's turbulent tendencies as manifested in its sudden fall last Friday, the market had been, in general, on a comeback mode.

Optimism and favorable expectations have been actually taking center stage over negative attitudes fueled by unfavorable developments. This became noticeable since the market was able to climb back to the 3,834.68 level on March 3. Since then, the market was on the rise despite negative developments such as the spike of oil prices due to the political-religious unrest going on in Libya, Yemen and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East.

Surely, Japan and other regional markets like ours will extend their losses at this time, which I may have to point out, had been happening even before the great disaster in Japan last Friday.

But I strongly feel that bad news will have no impact on the market in the near term owing to a nascent strength that had been also taking roots on our local front.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Leyte
MUNICIPALITY OF HILONGOS

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(BAC)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
FOR PROCUREMENT OF RURAL HEALTH UNIT MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS

1. The LGU - Hilongos, through the PROCUREMENT OF RURAL HEALTH UNIT MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS, intends to apply the sum of ONE MILLION PESOS (P1,000,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to cover payments under the contract for PROCUREMENT OF RURAL HEALTH UNIT MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The LGU - Hilongos now invites bids for the PROCUREMENT OF RURAL HEALTH UNIT MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS. Delivery of the Goods is required from 120 days after the receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP). Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project, equivalent to at least 50% of the ABC.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from LGU - Hilongos and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on March 15, 2011 up to April 1, 2011 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00). It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the LGU - Hilongos, provided that Bidders shall pay the fee not later than the submission of their bids.
6. The LGU - Hilongos reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before April 1, 2011, 9:00 a.m. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 18.
9. Bid opening shall be on April 1, 2011 at 10 a.m. at the address below. Bidders are encouraged to attend the opening but only the bidders with valid bids that are read will be allowed to participate in the post-qualification process.
10. The LGU - Hilongos reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to:

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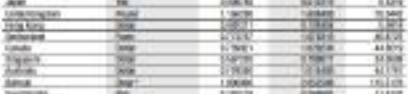

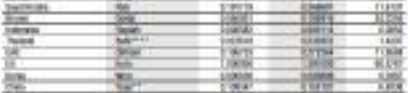

San Miguel posts 2010 net profit of ₱20.1B

Power-generation units contributed P45.7B in revenues

By Doris C. Dumlao

SAN MIGUEL Corp. chalked up P20.1 billion in net profit last year, only about a third of its bottom line in 2009 when it booked huge one-time gains from the sale of a substantial stake in the beer business.

But without non-recurring items, San Miguel's core net profit surged 181 percent from a year ago, SMC told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday. This was attributed to improved volumes in its food, beverage and packaging businesses as well as robust revenues from its power generation units.

Consolidated recurring cash flow (as measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) grew 75 percent to P82.3 billion.

Group-wide sales revenue rose 41 percent to P246.1 billion. Additional revenues totaling P45.7 billion were generated by its power businesses, resulting in a 75 percent jump in consolidated operating income to P94.8 billion.

"Our traditional businesses have held their own. Each of our new businesses stepped up in the plate and did what was expected of them," SMC chair and chief executive Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. said. "We are still in the very early stages of our diversification strategy but our energy business is pulling its share of the weight. In a year or so, energy could be a major contributor to SMC."

Flagship subsidiary San Miguel Brewery reported a 9 percent rise in revenues to P55.9 billion while operating income grew 27 percent to P16.6 billion on higher volume and favorable raw material prices.

Domestic beer volume rose 5 percent to 184 million cases from a year ago. But the volume of its international business slowed to 37 million cases due to difficult market conditions in China, its biggest investment. Sales for beer international beer operations generated P270 million in sales for year.

Food liquor unit Ginebra San Miguel posted a 40 percent rise in operating income to P1.5 billion as sales revenues expanded 16 percent to P13.7 billion. Domestic liquor volumes increased 7 percent to 59 million cases.

Consolidated food revenues amounted to P80.4 billion, 4 percent higher than a year ago. Favorable raw material prices helped bring up consolidated operating income by 38 percent to P5.9 billion.

San Miguel Yamamura Packaging Group ended 2010 with consolidated revenues of P22.6 billion, 19 percent higher than the previous year's. Consolidated operating income amounted to P3 billion, up 26 percent.

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Ayala Land to build hotel in Cagayan de Oro

AYALA LAND Inc. is building a 150-room hotel in Cagayan de Oro, the third of what is planned to be a nationwide chain of boutique hotels across the country.

The hotel, which will be part of the 3.7-hectare mixed-use development named Centrio, is expected to be completed in 2012, Ali said in a statement issued yesterday. The new project seeks to introduce "new industry benchmarks in Northern Mindanao" and is poised to be the first to the area to offer a full range of amenities, including retail and office in one integrated location.

The boutique hotel project is a joint venture between Ayalaland Hotels and Resorts Corp. (AHRC), a subsidiary of Ayala Land, and Filo Management and Investment Corp. (Ardent), a leading Mindanao firm with interests in real estate, real estate, hospitality and financing, among others. The chain of boutique hotels to be operated by AHRC will cater to both businessmen and tourists in key "underserved" markets of the Philippines.

The first boutique hotel will rise in Bonifacio Global City. The second, also a joint venture with Ardent, will rise in Davao City. All the three boutique hotels are expected to open next year.

Al Legaspi, vice president of ALI, said the 150-room, eight-story structure would be stacked above the three-story Centrio mall, with its main lobby on the fourth level. "The hotel has been designed to offer a stylish and warm hotel experience in the same time, it will provide easy and convenient access to restaurants, shops, cinemas and other retail outlets."

The hotel will also offer function and meeting rooms, executive lounge, a business center, indoor and al fresco restaurants, a fitness gym and swimming pool. Architects Inc. and C.T. Duglas Architects, which both have extensive experience in both the local and Asian markets, were awarded the architectural and interior design contracts, respectively. Doris C. Dumlao

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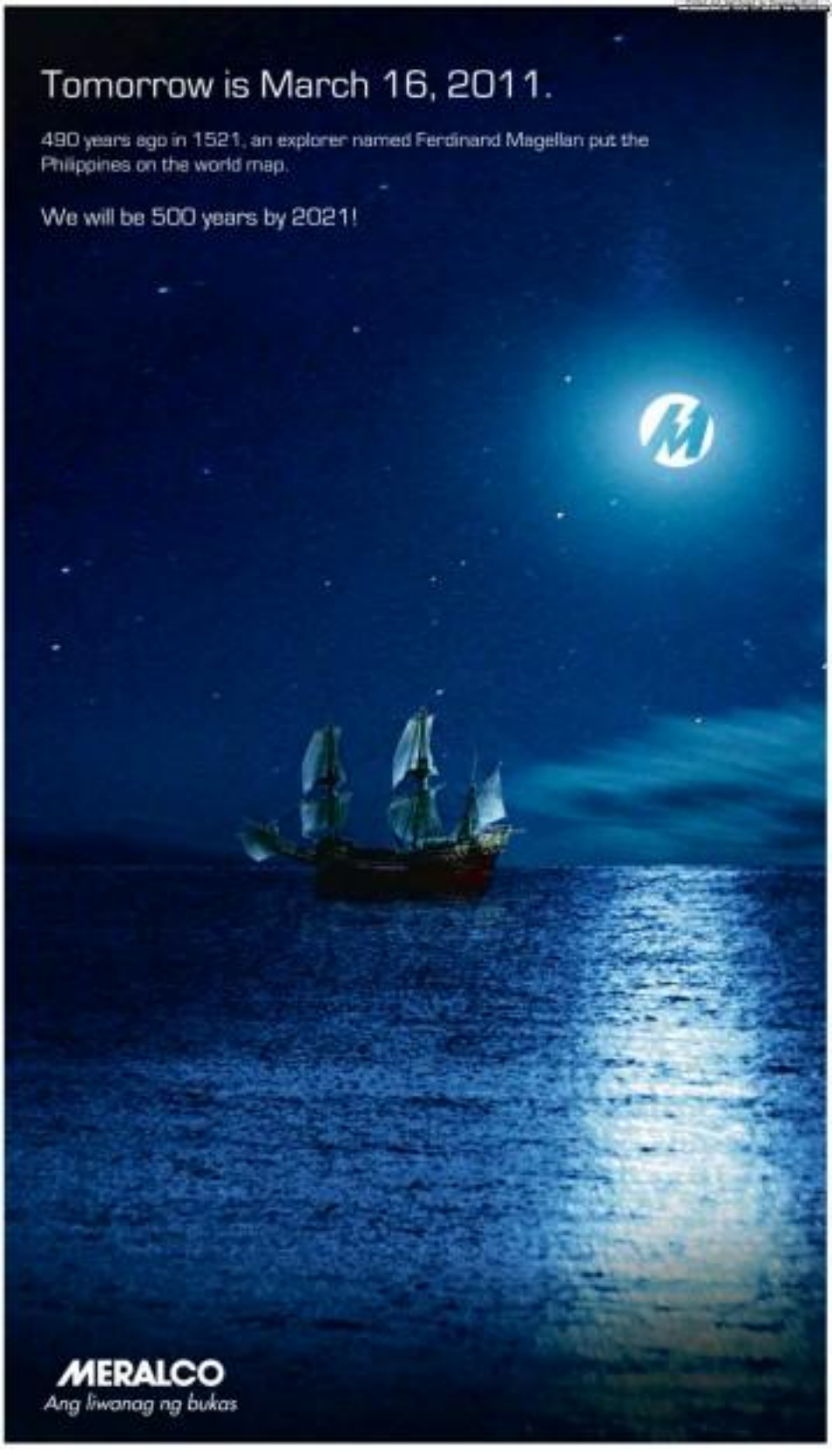
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BUSINESS

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BSP posts P80B in forex loss

Peso seen breaking 40:$1

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE PESO is expected to rise further through 2012 to break the 40:$1 level and trade at 39.00 in the first quarter next year, UBS Bank said in a report.

The Singapore-based bank said in its quarterly report for April-June 2011 that it remained optimistic about the medium-term fundamentals of the peso in spite of market volatility in the first quarter.

In the 126-page report, UBS said such fundamentals were stronger than those observed before the Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998.

"It is not unreasonable for the dollar-peso exchange rate to fall to 40 [by the end of the year], its low seen before the 2008 financial crisis," the bank said.

UBS took note of "the persistent surge of foreign reserves to record highs since 2002," settling at $62.9 billion as of January.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas show that the amount rose further to $63.9 billion in February.

"The bank and cash reserves were higher than the reported $59.6 billion external debt stock as of the third quarter of 2010.

"The other notable improvement in the past seven years was the external debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio falling to 23 percent from 73 per cent," UBS added.

The investment report, investment bank Barclays Capital said it was raising its mid-2011 peso-dollar exchange rate forecast of 44 to 41.5.

This is due, first, to a lower forecast of the balance of payments surplus to $30 billion from $11.5 billion amid the rise in oil prices which will weigh on the trade balance and lower portfolio flows.

Second, Barclays Capital said that the rising inflation—which reached 4.3 per cent in February—might limit the peso's appreciation through 2011.

The investment bank also said that while the BSP was considerable with the peso appreciation that was broadly in line with other regional currencies, it "has a bias to be in the middle of the pack rather than an out performer."

Increased market intervention blamed

By Michaelle V. Bunoan

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas incurred about P80 billion in losses from its foreign exchange operations in the first 11 months of 2010, as it stepped up efforts to stem upward pressures on the peso.

Mainly due to the foreign exchange loss, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas posted an overall net loss of P68.33 billion during the period. This was a sharp reversal of the P163.26 billion in net income recorded in the same period of 2009.

BSP officials said it was a policy of the central bank to maintain a market-determined exchange rate, but to intervene in the market from time to time to avoid sharp and sudden appreciation or depreciation. They said a volatile currency movement was disruptive to business.

With the strong pressures on the peso, the BSP had to engage in heavier-than-usual dollar buying, a costly activity, officials said. They said that if not for the intervention of the central bank, the peso could now be much stronger.

On the last trading day of 2010, the peso closed at 43.84 against the US dollar, rising by almost 5 percent from its value at the start of the year. Officials said the 5 percent appreciation of the peso was moderate compared to the double-digit rise of other major Asian currencies.

The rise of the peso made exporters uncomfortable. They claimed that the peso appreciation made Philippine-made goods less competitive in the world market.

Some exporters had been pressuring the BSP to buy more dollars, saying that the P43-to-a-dollar exchange rate was still too strong.

The BSP, however, said it was not its policy to achieve a strong peso but only to moderate potentially sharper fluctuations. Central bank officials said exporters should not rely heavily on the exchange rate for their competitiveness. It said the exporters' ability to sell more products offshore should be dictated by enhanced quality of the goods and services they were offering.

The net loss posted by the BSP in the first 11 months of 2010 was expected to be mitigated in December, resulting in a full-year income loss for the central bank.

ABS-CBN taps P3.1B in loan for expansion

By Paolo G. Montecillo

BROADCAST GIANT ABS-CBN Corp. has availed itself of the remaining P3.1 billion in the P5.0-billion loan facility made available by eight local financial institutions last year to help fund the network's expansion activities.

The Lopez-led multimedia firm on Monday said it first tapped the facility in November last year, drawing down P6.9 billion.

ABS-CBN today availed (itself) of a P3.1-billion loan for general working capital requirements," it said in a disclosure.

The loan is unsecured, carries interest and partly amortizing, maturing in 2017. The loan facility was signed in October to bankroll the company's expansion and refinance maturing loans.

Bank of the Philippine Islands, Banco de Oro, Security Bank, Sumitomo Life, Allied Bank, Allied Savings Bank, Philippine National Bank and PNB Life funded the loan.

Of the total amount, P6.4 billion was used to refinance existing debt while P3.4 billion will be used to fuel the company's continuing growth.

"The debt is intended for planned capital expenditure in digital terrestrial TV infrastructure and the continuing expansion requirements for cable TV and other services," the company earlier said.

Last week, the company said it likely posted a record profit of more than P5 billion largely due to the windfall coming from political advertising.

ABS-CBN chair Eugenio Lopez III said the company has set a target of matching its 2010 net income this year, despite the absence of political ads.

Proposed cap on credit card interest rates bucked

By GV C. Catacutan Jr.

BANKS WARNED Congress of the possible resurgence of "loan sharking" lenders at the rise of a black market for loans if the state imposed a ceiling on credit card interest rates.

"Given the proposed cap on interest rates, the credit card business may be compelled to close its operations. Most of the credit cardholders will transfer or return to borrowing from the informal system which means deprivation of the benefits (from credit cards) and exceedingly higher interest rates for the customers and lesser tax collection for the government," said Aurelio Montinola III, president of the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

During the hearings of the House committee on banks and financial intermediaries, Montinola said that putting a cap on credit card rates would make banks reluctant to increase lending and take on more risk.

"Take the case of Japan, where credit lending dropped since companies can no longer take on higher risks, thus lower-income level individuals and families were deprived of credit extensions. If the companies cannot compensate for the risks, then it is not prudent to extend credit," said Montinola.

For the bankers, the choice for government and consumers is clear—the credit card firms with their 2 percent to 3.5 per cent monthly interest rates or the five-six lenders with their monthly interest rates of 20 per cent to 240 percent per year. "Being an informal sector, the five-six lenders who take on high interest rates from their borrowers do not pay taxes to the government," said Montinola.

An official of the Credit Card Association of the Philippines said that when Japan, France and Germany imposed a cap on credit card interest rates, the black market expanded and forced regulators to either increase the ceiling or raise the credit card interest rates.

The House committee is conducting a public hearing to discuss several pending House bills seeking to regulate the credit card industry by keeping interest rates, and the abuses of lenders, in check.

Aside from providing quick access to cash, Montinola said the credit card industry boosted consumer spending and more taxes for the government. It provides retailers with faster transaction and thus generates (at least one-third of all goods sold were done through credit cards).

Montinola said the credit card interest rates covered the cost of handling millions of customers and the risk of not getting paid. Almost half of all credit card holders pay their monthly bills in full on due date giving them interest-free loans for at least 21 days.

Isabela Rep. Georgidi Aggabao, however, disputed the claim of bankers.

"That's a hogwash. On the contrary, capping the interest rate for credit cards at reasonable levels, perhaps closer to banking rates, should spur more interest to use the credit card," Aggabao said.

To dispel fears of the rise of the black market for credit, Aggabao said capping interest rates on credit cards should be accompanied by a "reinstatement" of the Usury Law to put a ceiling on how much the interest rates should charge customers.

Petron profit up 84%

By Kristy R. Bueno

PETRON CORP. posted an 84-percent increase in its net income to P7.9 billion in 2010 from P4.3 billion in the previous year.

This was due to the increase in petrochemical sales, the company said.

In a statement, Petron also disclosed that it had posted P220.1 billion in sales revenue, owing to its robust performance during the year.

According to the oil firm, 2010 saw a 73-percent rise in petrochemical sales volumes, a 98-percent rise in export sales and a foreign exchange gain of P1.2 billion.

Petrochemical sales hit 3.3 million barrels in 2010 compared to 1.9 million barrels the previous year. It can be recalled that the year 2010 marked the first full year of operations of the company's Bataan, Tabangao, and Mariveles (RTC) unit, which was commissioned only in April 2009.

The company's total export volume rose to 5.1 million barrels in 2010 versus 3.1 million barrels in 2009.

Domestic sales increased by nearly 6 percent to 41.1 million barrels last year from 40.7 million barrels in 2009. The rise in sales volumes can be attributed to increased economic activity, aggressive substitution of new accounts and the expansion of its service station network.

"We are already seeing the results of the value-creating initiatives that we have embarked on since San Miguel Corp.'s entry in Petron," said Petron chair and CEO Ramon S. Ang.

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OBITUARIES

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu

BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE
Notice No. (12) 2010-04, 3rd, for 4 lot(s)

INVITATION TO BID

Items/Description	CONTRACT ID NUMBER	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)	Bid Fee (Php)
1. FIRE (Multi)		3,150,000.00	2,000.00
2. FIRE MIST		4,150,000.00	2,000.00
3. EMPTION (Hazard)		2,450,000.00	2,000.00
4. EMPTION (Fire, Multi, Mist)		11,200.00	2,000.00
5. MIXED		45,000.00	50.00
6. SERVICES (Hazard)	Refer to Bid Book	1,750,784.00	2,000.00
7. SERVICES (Fire/Multi/Mist) - Hazard	Refer to Bid Book	2,150,000.00	2,000.00
TOTAL AMOUNT		14,316,984.00	

( ) Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

Funding Source : Local Funds
Delivery Period : Sixty (60) Month period

Bidding documents are available for sale upon completion of bidding procedures using a non-refundable bidding fee as indicated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." Bidders should have completed within two (2) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project amounted not less than fifty percent (50%) of the total ABC. The value of which is at least equivalent to fifty (50) of the total approved budget of the contract.

All contractors applying for eligibility classification and prequalification, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) 4(a).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 15-28, 2011
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 16, 2011, Wednesday, 2:00 PM
3. Submission & Opening of Bids	March 28, 2011, Monday, 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation/Determination of LCB	March 28, 2011
5. Post-qualification/Verification of LCRB	March 29, 2011
6. Approval of Resolution & Notice of Award	March 30, 2011
7. Issuance of Purchase Order	March 31, 2011

A complete set of **Bidding Documents** will be available to interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee as indicated above to the Cash Receipts Section, Office of the Provincial Treasurer. The non-refundable fee shall be paid to Cash Collection Manager of Cashier's Check issued by a reputable commercial bank payable to the Province of Cebu. **Only those who have purchased the bidding documents shall be entitled to attend the Pre-Bid Conference.** Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's duly authorized representatives. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The Province of Cebu reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject at any time any bid, prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to: **Ms. ELENA P. ARISTA**
BAC Secretariat
Cebu Provincial Government, 2nd Floor, Capitol Bldg., Cebu City
Tel. No. (032) 255-6118

(Sgd.) **MARIA S. MARTINEZ**
Chairman

(1) 3/15, 3/16 & 3/17

NATIONAL GRID CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

NOTICE OF INVITATION

FOR THE PROSPECTIVE ANCILLARY SERVICES PROVIDERS

1. With its circular role of providing Ancillary Services (AS) to all transmission users of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao Grids as required by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (EPIRA), its Implementation Rules and Regulations, the Philippine Grid Code (PGC) and the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) Rules, the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) is mandated to implement the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) – promulgated Ancillary Service Procurement Plan (ASPP) and this Ancillary Services Cost Recovery Mechanism (AS-CRM).
2. NGCP now calls all interested merchant plants and Independent Power Producers to participate in the provision of AS in order to maintain the reliability and security of the power grids. All generating companies are invited to apply for accreditation and present offers for the following AS:

Types of Ancillary Services	Offer
a. Regulating Reserve	- PhP/kW/hour - Available Capacity
b. Contingency Reserve	- PhP/kW/hour - Available Capacity
c. Dispatchable Reserve	- PhP/kW/hour - Available Capacity
d. Reactive Power Support	- PhP/kVAR/hour - Available Capacity of Reactive Power beyond the spectrum of 95% lagging and 90% leading power factor
e. Black Start (BS) Capacity	- PhP/kW per month of providing Black Start Capacity - Rating of each unit accredited as BS

3. Process of accreditation and acceptance of AS-offers shall be conducted consistent with the latest versions of PGC, Open Access Transmission Services (OATS) Rules and ASPP.
4. An Ancillary Services Procurement Agreement (ASPA) will be executed for offers from providers that are accredited by the System Operators (SO).
5. The ASPA shall be jointly filed by NGCP and AS Providers before the ERC following the provisions of ASPP which was approved on October 2007 by ERC under ERC Case No. 2005-046RC, as may be amended. The ASPA shall be implemented upon the grant of provisional authority or final approval by the ERC.
6. Prospective AS Providers may request for copies of Contract and Accreditation Procedures, ASPP, AS-CRM and ASPA templates to any Account Officers of the Network Customer Access and Relations (NetCAR)/Revenue and Regulatory Affairs (RRA). Prospective AS Provider may also request for orientation/briefing through mayreanrique@ngcp.ph; pddasalla@ngcp.ph, and Mr. Philip Dasalla at (02)981-2586 and Ms. Rosanne Arroyo at (02)981-2299.
7. Application for accreditation and submission of AS offers can be tendered directly to:

Ma. Cynthia Y. Manrique
Head, Revenue and Regulatory Affairs Department
National Grid Corporation of the Philippines
Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1100

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SM Megamall - Mandaluyong City
Unit 2, 2nd Floor, Crown Regency Plaza
Telefax 637-2081

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Manila (in front of National Library)
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Telefax 696-5211

Valenzuela Satellite Office
Unit 2, 2nd Floor, Crown Regency Plaza
Telefax 291-2081

Email address
publisher@gmail.com

NOTICE OF PRESENCE

Industrial Equipment; Office Furniture & Equipment; Household Equipment; etc.

Live Auction

Sale Date: Thursday, 17th March 2011 at 10:00 AM

Viewing Date: Wednesday, 16th March 2011 at 8:00AM-5:00PM

Location: Land Industrial Complex, Edison Ave. Brgy. 16, SLEX, Parañaque City

Refundable Deposit: Php5,000.00 upon registration

Assets Include:

Industrial Equipment: NOMLEB 60 KVA Generator Set, 70 kVa Gas Scrubber, ABUTOK 20'HP Pump, Industrial Gear Motors, Assrt. SKF Bearings/Pillow Blocks, SIEMENS Variable Speed Drive, etc.

Office Equipment / Furniture: Laptop / Pentium 3/4 CPUs, CRT Monitors, Printers, Fax Machines, CISCO Routers, GPS Location units / Fabrik Upholstered Benches / Swivel Chairs, Office Tables, Conference Table, Computer Table, Steel Pedestal 3 / 4 - Drawer Lateral Filing Cabinets, Kitchen Cabinets w/ Sliding Doors, Assrt. 4-Seater Dining Chairs, etc.

Household Equipment: Wooden Dining Tables, Leather / Fabric Upholstered Sofa, Wooden Bed Frame w/ Mattress, Center Table, TV Set, Mini Component, WASHLOMA / PANASONIC Refrigerator, Food Warmer, Washing Machine, etc.

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Fax No. (033) 315-9632 / (033) 315-9631 loc. 21
E-mail: bac@upv.edu.ph

INVITATION TO BID

1. The UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES VISAYAS, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified contractors registered with and accredited by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to submit the bid for the following projects:

Supply and Delivery of	Location	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Project Implementation (Contract Duration)
Supply of Laboratory Furniture for UPV Miagao and Iloilo City Campuses (Re-bid)	UPV Miagao and Iloilo City Campus	2,000,000.00	Sixty (60) days

2. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected by the Opening.
3. All prospective bidders on Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of the Bid Documents as implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).
4. The schedule of Bidding activities are as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE	IMPLEMENTATION
Issuance and availability of bidding documents	Starting March 15, 2011 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	BAC Secretariat (UPV – Iloilo City Campus)
Pre-Bid Conference	March 16, 2011 2:00 p.m.	CBE 1, College of Management Bldg., UPV Iloilo City Campus
Submission and Opening of Bids	April 1, 2011 2:00 p.m.	CBE 1, College of Management Bldg., UPV Iloilo City Campus

5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested prospective or interested bidders at the address stated below upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Seven Thousand Pesos (Php7,000.00) to the Cashier's Office.
6. Bids must be submitted to the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below on or before 2:00 p.m. of April 1, 2011 at the CBE 1, College of Management Bldg., UPV Iloilo City Campus. All bids must be accompanied by bid security in an amount equal to a percentage of the ABC in accordance with the following schedule:

	Form of Bid Security	Amount of Bid Security (Equal to Percentage of the ABC)
a.	Cashier's/manager's check, bank draft/guarantee confirmed by a commercial bank	Two percent (2%)
b.	Irrevocable letter of credit issued by a commercial or universal bank: Provided, however, That it shall be confirmed or authenticated by a commercial or Universal Bank, if issued by a Foreign bank	

LIQUIDATED DAMAGES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE

7. Request for clarifications on any part of the bidding documents in the pre-bidding conference must be in writing and submitted to the BAC Secretariat at least five (5) calendar days before the date of the pre-bid conference stated in item 4 above.
8. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's duly authorized representatives chosen to attend at the CBE1, College of Management Building, U.P. Visayas, Iloilo City Campus on 1 April 11, 2011.
9. Representatives attending the bidding activities must present Special Power of Attorney that they are authorized to represent on behalf of the company.
10. The University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder(s).
11. For more information, please refer to the Chairperson of the BAC Secretariat or any member of the Bids and Awards Committee for the composition of the BAC.
12. Refer to the address and tentative schedule of activities of the BAC Secretariat:

MRS. CHRISTINE CAPIO
Head, BAC Secretariat
Property and Property Services Office
Basic Administration Building, Miagao and Campus
Telefax No. (033) 315-9632 loc. 105 or (033) 315-9631 loc. 21
E-mail: bac@upv.edu.ph

(Sgd.) **DR. CARLOS C. BAÑAGA, DM**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

City Government of Dumaguete
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
City Hall, Dumaguete City

INVITATION TO BID

Item No.	Name of Project	Approved Budget for the Contract	Class/Date: Pre-Bid Conference	Class/Date: Deadline of Submission of Bids	Name of Bid Security (Refer to Instruction)
1.	Minor Services	100,000.00	March 24, 2011 10:00 a.m.	April 01, 2011 9:00 a.m.	5% Bid Bond
2.	Minor Services	200,000.00	March 24, 2011 10:00 a.m.	April 01, 2011 9:00 a.m.	5% Bid Bond
3.	Construction of Phase III, Multi-Purpose Building, Dumaguete City National Science High School (Formerly National Science High School) Extension, Bantayan, Dumaguete City	3,000,000.00	March 24, 2011 10:00 a.m.	March 31, 2011 9:00 a.m.	5% Bid Bond

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BUSINESS

Drop in factory prices slowing down, NSO says

Double-digit surge in petroleum, leather products offsets drop in prices of electrical goods

STOP HAIRLOSS NOW
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Experimenting with the wrong treatment and self-diagnosis can only worsen your hair problem – leading to permanent hairloss. To get real results, get professional help. Joey Marquez and Allan Caidic want to solve your hairloss and somebody as unique as you deserves to have Read on and find out how to stop thinning hair and a receding hairline.

For hairloss is no laughing matter. "When I started experiencing hairloss, people called me shokoy/san because my hair was receding to the size of a teaspoon's cup. I tried to not let it bother me, but the truth was it did," he says.

Genetics, poor nutrition, stress, certain medications and diseases can cause hairloss. "Many men triggered by stress, I tried special shampoos and topical remedies in the U.S., but they didn't give me lasting results," he adds.

For Allan, as a professional coach he always prefers to get advice from another professional. "When I tried solving my thinning crown area, I had no confidence to taste the counter products. Pains might be adverse side effects," he says.

A receding hairline, thinning crown area or falling hair – if not properly addressed can lead to baldness. "Treat receding hairline, but sought professional help," he shares.

For professional hairloss solutions – SVENSON is the answer! How did Joey and Allan beat hairloss and get thicker, healthier hair?

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Joey says: "In just a few sessions of treatments, I got thicker, healthier hair – that's even better than before I had hairloss! I look 10 years younger."

Allan says: "With my thicker hair, my self-confidence improved. My relationship with my family, my friends, my work, my love life and my hairloss issue – I can't be happier!"

Call Svenson Healthcare Hair Clinic today for Free Consultation! Visit a Svenson Hair Clinic near you at 892-6848 (4147) / 234-8851 (Cebu) or the FREE private consultation today.

By Bernie W. Dorotan

THE DECLINE in factory gate prices deepened further to 3.6 percent year-on-year in January amid double-digit surge in prices of petroleum and leather products, according to the National Statistics Office.

NSO data show that prices of manufactured items have been on a decline for 11 straight months, mainly due to the continuing decrease in prices of electrical machinery and non-electrical machinery.

These products continued to show double-digit declines—albeit at a slower pace—at 10.6 percent and 23.4 percent, respectively.

In the fourth quarter of 2010, the industry sector—including manufacturing—was cited as the main driver of economic growth, which was estimated at 7.1 percent.

Manufacturing grew faster at 8.9 percent in the October to December period, mainly due to the contributions of food, miscellaneous products, electrical machinery and chemicals.

However, growth in manufacturing was hampered by slower expansion in the output of tobacco, basic metal, leather and wood products.

Results from the NSO's latest monthly survey of factory gate prices—covering 20 selected groups of manufactured goods in chapters of the producer price index (PPI)—show that prices in three other groups shrank. 13 others gained and two showed no price changes.

Prices of paper and paper products dropped by 14.4 percent while those of furniture and fixtures, and manufacturing manufactures fell by 9.0 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively.

On the other hand, double digit gains were observed in petroleum products (12.2 percent) and leather products (10.9 percent).

Other gainers were food manufacturing, basic metals, rubber and plastic products, fabricated metal products, beverages, chemicals, non-metallic minerals, tobacco, transport equipment and textiles.

Prices of wood products showed no change for the ninth month in a row. There were also no price changes for publishing and printing.

On a month-on-month basis, the change in the PPI remained at 1.3 percent, the same change recorded in December.

The biggest gainers compared to December prices were furniture and fixtures, rubber and plastic products, and footwear and wearing apparel.

Exporters hit anti-overloading law

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EXPORT Development Council has expressed concern that the implementation of the Anti-Overloading Law may make exporters even less competitive, as lower load limits will require more trips, effectively picking up freight expenses.

In a position paper submitted to the Department of Public Works and Highways, the EDC said shipments should never allowed up to 23 tons of cargo per axle for trucks, a large difference from the 13.5 tons allowed under local law.

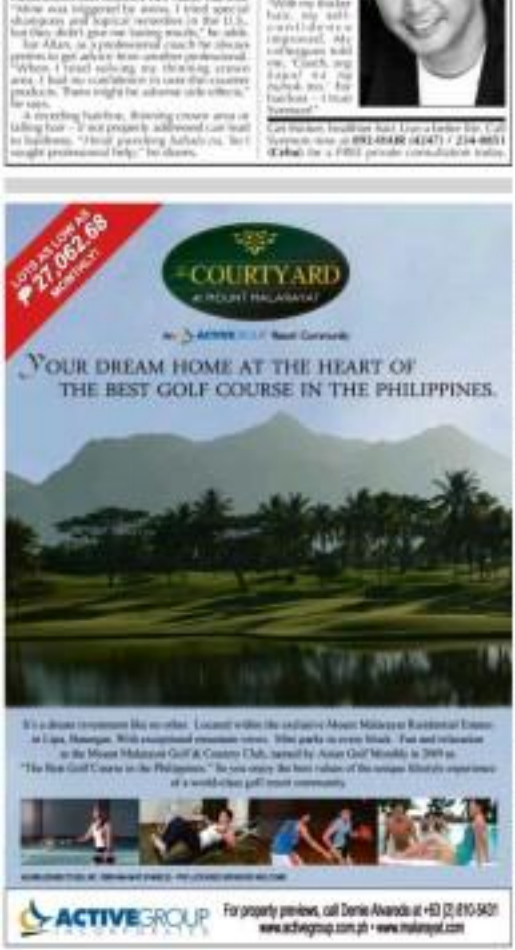
The axle load limit took effect last Feb. 1.

"The EDC executive committee recognizes the objective of the government to maintain good roads. However, the specifics of implementation of the anti-overloading provisions of Republic Act No. 8794 has produced a negative effect on the economy," the paper said.

EDC said that apart from being against international standards, certain provisions of the Anti-Overloading Law could also cause delays in the delivery of imported raw materials, which would then disrupt production schedules.

Lack of proper orientation of shippers and truckers, as well as inadequate weighing equipment, could also result in port congestion.

To prevent any of these negative possibilities from happening, the EDC called for the immediate suspension of the implementation of the law until the DPWH installs weight bridges to designated weighing stations and reviews the implementing rules of the law, taking into consideration feedback from the Department of Trade and Industry, Philippine Ports Authority, Bus Lines Confederation, and Philippine Exporters Confederation.



ANI posts income surge in '10

By Riza T. Olchondra

PUBLICLY LISTED AgriNurture Inc. (ANI) reported a 60-percent surge in its 2010 audited revenue, while earnings almost tripled year-on-year.

In its audited financial statements for 2010, ANI said it improved sales to about P1.6 billion in 2010 from P1 billion in 2009, while its profit for the year reached P93.6 million from P58.7 million in 2009.

ANI president and CEO Antonio L. Tiu said these growth should be higher in 2011.

"We are coming from a low base in 2010, and we didn't have presence in Hong Kong and China like we do now. We also have a larger local market, where we only had the 3M group last year. Also we are expanding the range of products this year, so it should be a good one," Tiu said.

The volume demand for fresh local, especially bananas, is expected to boost ANI's revenue and income in the first quarter, Tiu said. He expects revenue and income to improve in the "double digit" level in the first quarter this year.

Meanwhile, ANI is preparing a P2-billion fundraising from a stock rights offering (SRO) and a follow-on offering. The total proceeds will be used to fund expansion programs.

The SRO, to be held on a 1:1 ratio, is set to be completed within the second quarter. In the third quarter, ANI will undertake a follow-on offering.

The proceeds from the SRO and follow-on offering will be used to build additional capacity for ANI's cold storage facilities and improve backward integration.

The company is also expanding its local market from major supermarkets to groceries and wet markets.

Local firms get go-ahead to operate power plants

By Amy R. Remo

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has allowed four local firms to operate their power generation facilities, which will supply power mainly to Luzon and Visayas.

According to the ERC, it awarded certificates of compliance (COC) to the Metrobank group affiliate Cebu Energy Development Corp., Hedcor Sibulan Energy Corp., Bacnotan Energy Inc. and the municipality of Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA).

A COC is valid for five years.

The COC awarded to CEDC covered the third unit of the company's 246-megawatt coal-fired thermal power plant in Toledo, Cebu as well as the two units of emergency diesel engine-generating sets.

The third unit has already been synchronized to the Visayas grid.

CEDC has an electric power purchase agreement (EPA) with the Aboitiz-led Visayan Electric Co. (Vitco) at a contracted capacity of 105 MW for 25 years.

Hedcor Sibulan Energy was meanwhile granted a COC for its 3.04-kilowatt renewable energy generating facilities in Sta. Fe Bukidnon, Cebu.

These facilities use methane gas from animal waste as fuel.

Bacnotan's COC covered its 4.212-MW San Pedro landfill methane recovery and electricity generation power plant in San Pedro, Laguna.

SBMA, meanwhile, renewed its COC for the 120-MW Bunker C-fired diesel power plant facility and the 40-MW emergency diesel engine generating set at the Subic Freeport Zone.

According to the ERC, the diesel power plants started commercial operations in January 1995.

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Our list of top 15 CEO runners

MARTIN Lorenzo

They run businesses–and races. Meet top executives who also lead the pack when it comes to staying in great running shape

By Aimee B. Jardinero

BEFORE YOU come up with the excuse that you're too busy to exercise, think again. There are busy CEOs not only find time to exercise, but also do some several hours of the week to training.

They are driven, determined and passionate about their sport, the same may they are best on excelling in their industries.

Fernando Zobel de Ayala

CEO, vice chair and president of Ayala Corp.

Expect to find this CEO joining major races in the city. An advocate of green living and good health and a passionate runner, he finished his 21 km leg in the recent Condura Skyway Marathon 2011 in 1:55:10.

On March 27, you will most likely see him run the 21 km category again in the third Globe Run For Home 2011 (BHRD111), where his record last year was set at 1:49:06.

Wilfred "Fred" Uytengsu

President and CEO, Aloha Milk Corp.

The triathlon CEO, who stayed away from sports last year after suffering an injury that required two surgeries, said his Achilles' heel has always been running.

His injuries are usually running related, he said. "Due to biomechanical problem (leg length difference)."

This year, he plans on more running for running. His personal record (PR), so far, is 49:01 in the 10-km category and 1:50:11 for 21 km.

David Charlton

CEO, Benefit Value Inc.

A triple bypass operation last year set back his running mileage to only about 400 km last year. This CEO of a popular chain of hair and beauty salons has a full marathon record (42 km) at 3:43, 21 km 1:37, and 10 km at 41 minutes.

His aforementioned record, his longest run ever at 60 km, was finished in 10:41.

Richie Santos

VP, Cinderella Marketing Corp. and director/owner, Cafe Javvia Pizza Kitchen

At 38-0, this VP can well over 1,000 km. He joined two full marathons and one triathlon race. His PR for 21 km is at 1:45, while his full marathon record was set in New York City, where he clocked in 4:21.

Camilla Brooks

General manager, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts

This GM ran finish a 21 km race faster than most men—younger or older—at 1:48. She has joined four full marathons, with a sub-hour PR.

Our list of top 15 CEO runners

From page C1

so far (3:56). She has joined two ultramarathons—the 160-km 4th Pilarenbo race where she finished to at 8:37, and the PAU 170 km) at 6:58. She covered a total running distance of 3,500 km last year.

Martin Lorenzo

CFO, Oryx Baseline Services Inc.

He started running in 2008 and joined his first triathlon in 2009. He finished 25th in a 113-km ultramarathon, finishing in 13 hours. His 42-km record is at 3:13, 21 km at 1:36, and 10 km, which he rarely does anymore, at 50:30. He runs a total of 70–100 km each week.

Jaime Pizarro

Publisher/owner, *The Bull Runner* magazine

Author and owner of the award-winning blog called "The Bull Runner," this woman has helped thousands of Filipinos finish their first 42 km through her annual Ormoc Marathon series. Her PR stands at 40:37 for 10 km, 1:52 for 21 km, and 4:24 for 42 km.

Ed Francisco

President, BDO Capital and Investment Corp.

Last year this banker logged well over 3,000 km total distance in running. His Sierra Nevada marathon record is 4:06, while his 21 km is 1:34, 15 km is at 1:05, 10 km is at 46:55 and 5 km is at 23 min.

Mia Nolasco-Gonzalez

Managing director, LuxAsia Inc.

All set to join her first 12 km during the Globe BAY RUN, her 10-km PR so far is 53 min and 16 km at 1:44. She runs anywhere from 30-40 km per week, always at 6:30 a.m.

Jhoe Gesse

President, Loadpack Inc.

The author and owner of the popular running website, takbo.ph, he ran a total of 900 km last year. He has joined three full marathons so far, with a PR of 5:30. His 21 Km record is 2:06 and 10 km is at 52 minutes.

Ruby Gaa

COO and president, MegaManila Inc.

A gold medalist powerlifter who later takes morning seriously early in the last five months, this COO ran two 10 km in 57 min and 5 km in 25, joining many-almost every weekend, she is currently training for her first full marathon on March 20.

Jonel Mendoza

CEO/publisher/owner, *Pan Pressur* magazine

In 2010 he covered a total of 3,600 km. He has joined 13 ultramarathons. Las almanza, ranging from 50 km to 160 km. His 42-km record is at 3:47:08, 21 km is at 1:50:43, 10 km is at 45, and 5 km is at 22 min. He is frequently invited to talk about ultramarathons around the country.

Marilen Concepcion

Owner, 8+8 Home Studio Manila

When she's not teaching or practicing the discipline, this certified Stott Pilates instructor steps out of the studio to run. Last year she covered approximately 1,000 km. Her 42-km PB is 5 hours. Last year, during Globe's run, she finished in a 21 km PB of 00:02:31. She finishes a 10-km leg in 00:01:23 and 10 km in one hour.

Bobby Ang

VP and corporate counsel, Ayannah Group Holdings Inc.

Logging in a total of 900 km last year, this executive clocked in a PR of 4:54 in the 42-km category. His 21 Km PR is 2:01, 10 km is at 52 minutes and 5 km is at 28 min.

Rafael Cuenca

Managing director, Sterling Trucking Corp.

With a 10-km PR of 00:49:50, he was able to cover a total mileage of 1,200 km last year. His 21-Km PR is 2:40:47.

European Commission supports breast cancer drug

ROCHE ANNOUNCED today that the European Commission confirmed that bevacizumab, in combination with paclitaxel, remains a treatment option for women with metastatic breast cancer in Europe. The decision follows recent recommendations made by the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) that the commission has been convincingly shown in studies women with metastatic breast cancer to live longer without their disease getting worse.

"We are pleased that the European Commission is continuing to support bevacizumab in combination with paclitaxel," said Hal Barron, MD, chief medical officer and head, global product development. "This is important news for thousands of women living with incurable HER2-negative breast cancers in the European Union."

Paclitaxel is the chemotherapy most frequently used in Europe, and also most frequently partnered with bevacizumab for the first-line treatment of metastatic breast cancer. The commission also followed a CHMP recommendation to remove the combination of bevacizumab with docetaxel for the first-line treatment of metastatic breast cancers from the label.

The updated label is effective immediately.

Avastin first gained approval in the US for advanced colorectal cancer in 2004, bevacizumab became the first anti-angiogenic therapy made widely available for the treatment of patients with an advanced cancer.

Today, bevacizumab is now the drug to transform cancer care through its proven survival benefit across several types of cancer. Bevacizumab is approved in the US and Europe for the treatment of advanced stages of colorectal cancer, breast cancer, non-small cell lung cancer and kidney cancer, and it is also available in the US and over 21 other countries for the treatment of patients with glioblastoma (a type of brain cancer).

The medicine has made antiangiogenic therapy a fundamental pillar of cancer treatment today, cure-three quarters of a million patients have been treated with it so far.

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is a leader in research-focused healthcare with combined strengths in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. Roche is the world's largest biotech company with truly differentiated medicines in oncology, virology, inflammation, metabolism and CNS. Roche is also the world leader in in vitro diagnostics and tissue-based cancer diagnostics and a pioneer in diabetes management. In 2010, Roche had over 80,000 employees worldwide and invested over nine billion Swiss francs in R&D.

For more information, go to www.roche.com.

Remembering Uri Geller's amazing powers

ABOUT TWO years ago, I received this e-mail message from a certain Steve Knight requesting details of my experience with Uri Geller, wherein he duplicated a drawing I had done which he had not seen before.

"I was a website about 'Uri Geller,'" said Steve, "and one of the pages deals with Uri's feat of duplicating people's drawings. See www.nom.demon.co.uk/ugtrd.htm.

"In your book 'More Encounters with the Hidden(s),' you described an occasion where Uri duplicated a drawing you did. I would like to put the details of this incident on my website, but unfortunately, I don't have access to your book except via Google Books review. Could you please describe what happened, when and what it was that you drew and Uri reproduced?"

Geller is the famous Israeli psychic who astounded the world in the early '70s with his seasoned ability to bend metal spoons, keys and rings without physical force, and by using only the power of his mind.

A former desk entertainer and military paratrooper who saw action in the Gulf War, Uri Geller is also known to make broken watches and clocks run again through sheer will power.

Although Uri has demonstrated his celebrated (mind over matter) powers in many parts of the world the past three decades, there are still people who think that what he was doing was mere trickery or sleight of hand.

Despite attempts by some skeptics, like the magician James Randi, to discredit him, Uri has never been conclusively proven to be taking his powers. Even the highly respected Stanford Research Institute (now called SRI International) in Menlo Park, California, which investigated his powers under strictly controlled scientific conditions, could not tell for certain if his mind-bending abilities were a hoax.

Inner Awareness

Jaime T. Licauco

Tired of bending spoons

After doing his mind-bending demos for decades, Uri Geller had grown tired of it. In fact, during the international conference on alternative healing and paranormal phenomena held in Düsseldorf, Germany in 1994, where I first met him, Uri Geller, who was one of several internationally known speakers, did not even demonstrate spoon-bending. Instead, he demonstrated an even more astounding and awesome psychic power by making a radish seed in his palm sprout in only a few minutes. I witnessed this miraculous phenomenon together with about 1,000 other people in the audience.

After Uri Geller's talk, I had a chance to have a private interview with him in his hotel suite. The only other person present was his brother-in-law, who was his frequent companion.

When I entered his suite, Uri said, "Hey, my I don't have a spoon to bend for you, but I will do something else. Give me two of your business cards."

After handing him two of my cards, Uri said, "Now, I will give you back one of your cards and I want you to draw anything at the back of that card. I will turn my back towards you so I won't see what you are drawing. After you have finished, you should cover your drawing with your hand or turn the card over. I will then face you and ask you to concentrate on the telepathically what you had drawn on your card. And I will draw on the other card what you had drawn. Are you ready?"

I said, yes, but I was so excited and nervous to be having such a mental duel as a psychic personality whom I had only read about in books, that I couldn't think straight. I wanted to draw a simple flower with three petals. But when I drew instead looked more like a tree than a flower.

I then covered my drawing with my right hand. Then Uri faced me and said, "Now concentrate your drawing to me by thinking of it."

After about 20 seconds, he said with his eyes closed, "I am seeing something, I don't know what it is, but it looks like this." And then he quickly drew on the other card exactly the same image I had drawn, which was still covered by my hand.

I asked Uri, "How do you do that?" He said when someone is transmitting a drawing to him, an image appears in his mind. If that image remains with him for about 20 seconds, he knows he got it correctly and he simply draws on paper what he has seen mentally.

To me, what Uri Geller demonstrated during that conference in Düsseldorf, namely, his ability to make a radish seed grow in a couple of minutes and to duplicate within seconds what another person had drawn without seeing it, are more impressive than the spoon-bending demos he usually does.

Note: The next Basic Esoteric Intuition Development seminar, which includes spoon-bending through telekinesis, will be held this weekend, March 19 and 20. For details on how to join this seminar, call tel. no. 810-7205 or text 09028 981 4962. E-mail jaimelicauco@yahoo.com or visit my website: www.jaimetlicauco.com.

When I met him in 1994, the famous Israeli psychic demonstrated abilities more impressive than metal-bending

Ms. Celina J. Leonardo, daughter of Mr. Roderick A. Mrs. Rebecca Leonardo, businessman from Bulacan, will celebrate her debut on April 02, 2011 at the Grove, Rockwell. Born March 15, 1993, Celina is currently studying at FEJAC Manila taking up IB Accountancy. She is a consistent honor student from grade school to college and has won the prestigious regional math & science contest in region 3. A beauty and brains girl, Celina is consistently in the dean's list and was also the Ms. Hiyas Ilaw de Bulacan last freshman year.

The event caterer is no less than Mr. Alec del Rosario of Juan Carlo catering while the event stylist is Henry Pascual. Her gowns were specially designed and executed by the one and only Randy Ortiz. The event planner is Celia Curation of The Social Connection Events, and the emcee is Tony Toni Suarez of The Boys Night Out. These professionals surely make the party entertaining and exciting! Exclusive of her members of traveling, being born in 11 countries to date, Celina chose "One Night in Paris" as the theme of her special day.

Announcer by Arnel Pagsa

Sportswear brand hold races in Southeast Asia

ADIDAS HAS launched a running champ-ionship across Southeast Asia, the King of the Road. Held in five countries across the region, the Adidas KOR II will culminate in a race-off, first 25 in the Dominican Global City, Laguna. The Philippines is the host country. The race will be in Thailand on May 15; Singapore, Aug 28; Indonesia, Sept. 25; Malaysia, Oct. 2. It is aimed at bringing runners together from across the region as part of Adidas' commitment to the sport.

The event is open to participants across two categories—the Distant category is (male/female) and the Sprint category (Men/Women) is for intermediate participants. The winners in the regional races will qualify for an all-expenses paid trip to compete in the Philippines on Oct. 23.

Photo workshop at Bencab Museum

Learn To Dusk 2011 photography workshop with Todd Hedges (senior Bakhtiglas) comes will be held on April 29-May 1 at BenCab Museum, Km 6 in Baguio (Km. 6 Asin Road) Mina. Bangued (000) 439-1654, www.bencabmuseum.org).

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*Based on the development scheme

LOCATION MAP

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AYELLANA II Associate president Joe Avellana, SM VP for marketing and communications Millie Dizon, former Secretary of Agriculture Cito Lorenzo Jr., "The Inaugural" painter Maria Montellano and Max Puno a.k.a. Juana Change

THE YELLOW Ribbon Movement with Hon. Cesar Sarino during the exhibit and book launch of "The Inaugural" at The Block, SM City North EDSA

SCMC president Annie Garcia (third from left) with Tess Alba (second from left) with SCMC VPs for operations Ben Macion and Steven Tan, SCMC regional operations manager Renee Bacani and SM City North EDSA assistant mall manager Hershey Bogaite

SM exhibit celebrates Edsa's 25th anniversary

MALLGOERS WILL have the opportunity to relive the spirit of the Edsa Revolution at "The Inaugural Exhibit" outdoors in time for SM Malls, which began last February.

The exhibit, which is based on the book published by President Aquino's campaign media bureau head Maria T. Montellano, was launched last Feb. 17 at The Block in SM City North EDSA as part of the Edsa 25th Anniversary celebrations.

Vice President Jejomar Binay and Kris Aquino-Dee were the guests of honor in the event attended by government officials, People Power commission members, and friends and relatives of the Aquino family.

The event was highlighted by musical performances by Ryan Cayabyab and the SC singers, as well as a shower of yellow confetti, reminiscent of the ones in Makati.

"The Inaugural" chronicles the campaign of Mr. Aquino, son of former President Corazon C. Aquino and renowned political leader Benigno Aquino Jr., through images by senior photojournalists and accounts written by participants of the grassroots, volunteer-powered campaign that brought him to the presidency.

Mr. Aquino, like his mother, was drafted by popular will and installed as President by the re-emergence of citizen action. The photographs and accounts in the book are welcome to the making of a powerful.

Montellano, produced this book on his inauguration from a personal journey. Her work as a television and stage director since the 1970s helped open the field of television communications to women. She was later drawn into public service by former Pres. Joseph Estrada, who appointed her head of the radio and television infrastructure of the government center.

After the March 15 launch in February, the exhibit was also showcased at SM Megamall, and will be at SM City Cebu on March 18 to 27; SM City Davao on April 1 to 10; SM City Naga on April 15 to 26; SM City Bacoor on May 13 to 19; SM City Bacolod on May 13 to 22; SM City Iloilo on May 20 to June 5; and the SM Mall of Asia on June 9 to 15.

GRABBING honors during "The Inaugural" exhibit ribbon-cutting ceremony were Vice President Jejomar Binay and Kris Aquino-Dee together with SCMC president Annie Garcia and SCMC VP for operations Steven Tan. Also in the photo are Pastor Boy Saguisa, SM VP for marketing communications Millie Dizon, PCOO fac. Hermie Coloma, SCMC regional operations manager Renee Bacani and the publisher of the book, Maria T. Montellano

RYAN Cayabyab with his singers

VICE President Jejomar Binay signs the book, with Maria Montellano and Makabayang Pilipino Movement's Ernie Hernandez

GIVING Ballinga their Toro Medals (second from left), PDI columnist and "The Inaugural" contributing writer Conrado de Quiros, IBC-13 board director Gita Cruz and Makabayang Pilipino Movement's Ernie Hernandez

FORMER cohosts Cheska Iñchausti and Pastor Boy Saguisa

A VOLUNTEER was another yellow ribbon amid hundreds of others.

Little changes that go a long way

From sleeping right to getting a rich homemade mini-facial, here are some tips to help you look and feel better

INSIDE OUT

Gary Ostrino

SLEEP POSTURE: Just a reminder to support your spine. It's not only your posture but feeling when you are awake and active that matters. According to Miguel del Prado, nerve and muscle specialist who has successfully combined western and eastern approaches to body manipulation and muscle therapy, every move we make puts pressure on our spine. The more highway of our body is the spine, and any awkward repetitive motion we do on a daily basis will eventually lead to pain.

Because it is easy to misalign the spine, we need to be more conscious about the way we sit, walk, exercise, and even sleep. The ideal way is to put a small pillow between your legs if you are a side sleeper. Lying supine, your face upward, place a small pillow under your head, to ease pressure on the neck. Miguel's unique techniques for undoing the negative effects caused by our bad habits are so effective that within a single session, pain and discomfort are eased by up to 75 percent. Amazing but true. Contact 896-0136/ 0922-8000/ 0917-624-1104.

Daily fasting. Many people do not have the time for exercise. That's understandable. We all get caught up in the busy-ness of business. But at the end of the day when you are feeling exhausted, you only have yourself to blame. Truth is, the more you move your body, the greater the energy reserves you create for yourself. First of all, your breathing becomes more efficient and circulation improves, which contributes to better health.

If you decide to get started on an exercise regimen, walking is the best and least expensive way. But what kind of walking? Brisk walking for 30 minutes is perfect for heart health and body toning. If you want specific results, wear fitness shoes that work on your calves, posture and balance. Skechers SharpUps and Tone-Ups, for example, have a heel-to-toe system that provides cushioning and natural instability by having the toes and body to increase muscle activity for better balance. This remarkably effective system tones muscles and tightens the buttocks.

Herbal power. There is a little known herb with ancient roots that is an efficient appetite suppressant and fat-burner. It's called garcinia cambodia. It perks up the metabolism by speeding it up naturally, without causing accelerated heart rate or palpitations. Natalia, a refreshing slimming juice, has a combination of the herb and glucomannan, a super source of vitamin A, C, calcium, potassium, iron, and protein. Call Intramuralus at 0922-889-9196.

Beauty treat. Mix potent hydrating oils three drops virgin coconut oil, three drops extra virgin olive oil... and six drops of fresh milk. Place a light film on the face. Leave on for seven minutes. Rinse and feel renewed.

Today's affirmation: "My beauty is timeless."

Love and light!

FLATTEN YOUR STOMACH BULGES QUICKLY, EASILY

with CoolSculpting

Carrying excess fat in your abdominal areas makes you prone to heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and erectile dysfunction.

It doesn't stop there. Your mood, energy level, breathing and sleeping are also affected when you're bulging with fat around. Aside from these serious health concerns, unsightly love handles, back fat and tummy bulges make any man appear rounder, heavier and poorly maintained. If you're one of the many who are struggling with stubborn bulges, FOR MEN's CoolSculpting treatment is your fast and easy solution!

What is CoolSculpting?

CoolSculpting is the latest US-FDA approved treatment in body contouring. It's ideal for men who need fat layer reductions in specific areas of their bodies such as love bellies, love handles, fat in your flanks and back, and pinch. Like all other treatments at FOR MEN, CoolSculpting is non-invasive and it's proven safe and effective. It only takes an hour to treat each target area so you're free to come in and out of the centre without hassle. Absolutely no downtime required. It's quick and easy fat reduction made convenient for you.

Who are the best candidates for CoolSculpting?

It's for men who need spot reduction on specific areas that can't be resolved by diet and exercise. It is not a way to lose weight or treat obesity.

How does CoolSculpting work?

CoolSculpting uses the Zeltiq advanced cooling technology to awaken, shrink and eliminate the fat cells in your problem areas. It's just like targeting your fat cells with a laser freeze gun until the fat cells shrink and disappear. Since it's non-invasive, the fat is eliminated through natural metabolic processes. You won't feel anything out of the ordinary after your treatments. Also, because it's a spot reduction treatment, the surrounding skin and tissues in your problem area will be left unharmed. After just one treatment, you are guaranteed a 22.4% of fat layer reduction in the targeted area. Apart from this, CoolSculpting will shave and re-contour your body to a more ideal shape or form.

What are the results from CoolSculpting?

Your love belly, love handles, belly and other fat bulges will be flattened and reduced. Expect a flatter and leaner body once you complete your sessions. You'll achieve a healthier and more impressive physique without hassle!

CoolSculpting will shave and re-contour your body to a more ideal form.

Losing your stubborn bulges is the best way to achieve a healthier body! Call FOR MEN at 813-1988 for a FREE private consultation today!

LIFESTYLE Wellness

When eating for sports or fitness regimen, timing is most important

By Mirel Felipe Mendoza
Contributor

What to eat, and when, are as crucial as the amount and type of training you put into sports

THE AMOUNT, QUALITY and timing of your food intake are as important as the amounts and type of training you do for your desired sports performance, whether it's to improve your time in your next race, to lift heavier in your power lifting competition, or to finish your first triathlon.

Proper eating for sports and exercise also delays the onset of fatigue and reduces the risk of injury, stomach problems and heat cramps.

The need to eat

Some people can skip a pre-exercise meal and still do well in a 45-minute swim. Others are used to eating something before any activity.

The guidelines in eating a few hours before and during the workout treat somewhat what foods and drinks work best for you in your training sessions.

Sports nutrition guidelines

-Eat three to four hours before the event.

If you are too excited to put your first half or full marathon and you are already awake four or five hours before the actual event, make sure you eat a light meal a few hours before the actual event to top off your muscle stores.

According to the source Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutrition, a dietetic practice group of the American Dietetic Association, you can have peanut butter or jam on toast, an oatmeal with almonds and bananas, or a turkey, hamburger, or low-fat ricotta melt sandwich, with fat-free yogurt, a fruit or fruit cup and a sports drink.

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

A-LIPAN — By JOSE ABREN

PUGAD BABOY — By Pol Jamero

DICK TRACY

LOKOMOKOYS — By ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

BABY BLUES — By JERRY SCOTT

KIKO MACHINE — By MANOS ABREN

BEN — By DANIEL SHELTON

HUTTS

SHERMAN'S LAGOON — By JIM TOOMEY

DUSTIN — By STEVE KELLY AND JEFF PARKER

TULDOK — By NARA COLL

HOROSCOPE

By FRANCIS CRAIZ

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) This is a wonderful, upbeat, positive day. You'll be quick to see the big picture, which will give you a broad understanding of conflicts that's happening.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Although you're enthusiastic about several issues today, there is a tendency to overlook small details. So if you're consulting for something, just deal with the issues at hand.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) People in group situations are ready to analyze what you have to say today because you are like the Pied Piper. You can promote practically anything!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) This is a wonderful day to make a good impression on bosses, parents, teachers and VIPs. You exuded sensible and experienced, so if you really know what you're talking about. Others want to learn from you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Fascinating topics in different subjects from all over the world will appeal to you today. This is an excellent day to make smooth plans. You're ready to socialize and new knowledge!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Discussions about shared resources, insurance matters, inheritances, debt, and taxes will go well today. However, guard against overlooking details. Nevertheless, everyone's willing to share positive feelings with you today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Opportunities are everywhere for you. People are upbeat and happy. Work-related travel is likely. Meetings, gatherings and work units will function smoothly.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Because you're in touch with your inner voice today, you are highly creative. This is a wonderful day to make recommendations. It's also a good day to acquaint social activities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) It's a great day for real estate transactions, don't forget to read the small print. Remember: What the large print giveth, the small print taketh away!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) It's new to be upbeat, self-assured and confident about things today. You will enjoy meeting new faces and going new places. Double-check all details, for accuracy's sake.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) This is an excellent day for hard work and concentration. You've got big ideas that you want to implement, and you are hopeful for success. Be brave, others will follow.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Today, you are more introspective, or people's viewpoints. In fact, you might relocate there or take them in on a different approach to something.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

	9		6		7			
	5	4		1			9	3
			3				7	
6						4		5
	3						2	
2		7						9
	2				1			
3	8			9		2	1	
			4		6		5	

Medium ★★

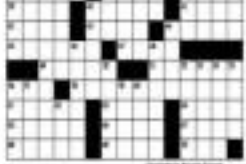
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Land of spies
6 Recommendations for sure investors
11 Of the neighborhood
14 Unwanted spam
15 Bookish frame, abbr.
16 Delectable
17 Component
18 Of old age
19 Business transactions
20 Infamy
22 Good reason for short
23 Tried
24 Beatles' cry
25 Oiling
26 Lunatic
27 Sun-dances
28 Chemical
31 It rarely rains
33 A big variety of
36 Infinite name
37 Publication's health
38 Contemplate
40 Affirmative
41 Interesting
42 Trending theories and beliefs
47 Actor Rodriguez
48 Outbursts of laughter
49 Mystical
50 Bee
51 Top Norwegian publication
52 Ancient
53 Financial institution
54 Work for a time
55 Ship's front
56 Flower parts
57 Chief of the CIA
58 Cartoon masterpiece

DOWN

1 Take off
2 Video-hosting website
3 Sweetheart
4 Personalities
5 Pool technology
6 Tiny bit
7 Rainforest biome
8 Iron-ore supplement
9 Pro ___ (for one)
10 Bite for rat
11 Business associates
12 Court order
13 Car lease deal
21 Country guitar virtuoso
24 Bird's whooping
29 Take off
30 Cowpoke
31 Pampered
32 Hollywood deal
33 Ancient warring tribe
34 Prayers' ends
35 Stuffed
36 Ancient
37 Ancient
39 Actor Jones
41 Office supplies
42 Travel allowance
43 Unencumbered
44 Off-ramp
45 Hard-to-solve jokes
46 Tablets
47 Part of the second hand
50 Crooked
51 Mineral used to make the magazine



Medium

Five ways to greater personal well-being

GRADUATION season, the season in the Middle East, rising gas prices, recession, corruption—issues both personal and professional can easily wreak havoc on one's emotional state.

Both and prayer help keep one grounded. Knowing and trusting there is Someone greater than all of us who has control over all these events helps ease the tide of worry and anxiety.

However, there are additional steps we can take to preserve our well-being during stressful times.

In 2008, the New Economics Foundation was commissioned by the UK Government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Well-being to review the interdisciplinary work of over 400 scientists from across the world. Their aim was to identify a set of evidence-based actions to improve well-being, which individuals would be encouraged to build into their daily lives.

The study describes the concept of well-being as comprising two main elements: feeling good and functioning well.

"Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience of their life. Equally important for well-being is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one's life and having a sense of purpose are all important aspects of well-being." (Huppert, 2008)

The NEF study found five evidence-based actions we can build into our everyday lives so that we can be more joyful and peaceful.

Connect.

Connect with the people around you and with family, friends, colleagues and neighbors, at home, work, school or in your community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Social networks provide a buffer against ill mental health, and studies have shown that happy people have stronger social relationships than less happy people.

"Strong social relationships are supportive, encouraging and meaningful while broader, more 'superficial' relationships are important for feelings of connectedness, belonging and sense of self-worth associated with an individual's position in a community. The key message is that time and space must be given to both types of relationships," said the study.

Facebook is good, but actual face-to-face contact is so much better!

Be active.

Go for a walk or run. Step outside and play. Garden or dance. Exercise. Discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of fitness.

I notice that it is in those weeks when I am unable to exercise that I become cranky and get into a funk. The NEF study shows that regular physical activity is associated with a greater sense of well-being and lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

"To be clear, however, if regular exercise has a direct influence on feelings of well-being, or whether well-being is a determinant of regular exercise behavior."

Feeling blue? Go take a hike—literally.

Take notice.

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savor the moment, whether you are in a car, eating lunch or in a mall shopping.

"Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you."

I like waking up early to catch the sunrise. I go and dance when it is a full moon. At night when all is quiet, I go and watch my children sleep. The honest, here, I suppose, is to never lose the wonder and the joy of simplicity.

Keep learning.

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course.

"Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favorite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do."

Yes, you can always teach an old dog new tricks, as long as the dog is open to learning.

"Randomized evidence suggests the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities helps to lift older people out of depression."

Who says you can't run a marathon at 60, or complete your doctorate at 70? There need be always something new to engage you, to stimulate you and get you out of bed everyday.

Give.

Pass last sweet to my brother. Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time.

"Focusing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate their selves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in well-being."

Although much of the world awaits in disarray and life has become more complicated, going back to the basics and incorporating these simple steps into our lives will help raise our well-being questions.

Happier and mentally healthier citizens, after all, make for a better and more peaceful place to live in.

Email the author at carly-baker@gmail.com

ROOTS AND WINGS

Carly Baker-Ubelaker

Seminar on mid-life transition in religious life

THE FORMATORS' Institute at Tuesday (June 21st) 2011 will be held on May 9-14 at the Monastery of the Transfiguration in San Jose, Mandaluyong City, Beliefnet.

"Mid-life Transition in Religious Life" is a one-week program that aims to support the needs and concerns of religious formation houses and seminaries all over the country.

For 2011 it is a response to an often expressed need. "Mid-life Transition in Religious Life" is open to religious men and women involved in formation, such as those beginning to explore the ministry and those registered/seasoned formators who wish to be enriched further in their knowledge and in refining their skills.

At the very least, formators will expect over a community of friends sharing experience and building bridges for personal and institutional support. The seminar workshop will not only be beneficial to the formator himself but to the whole community as well. It is good that someone in a religious community is properly trained to identify support and accompany members who could be in this often difficult stage called mid-life transition.

Topics to be presented include Changes and Transitions; the Developmental Passages; Transformation of Consciousness; the Role of Heroism and Humility in Mid-life Transition; and Mid-life Spirituality.

A registration fee of P7,500 will include tuition, meals and accommodations from May 9 to May 14 after breakfast, a seminar kit and a Certificate of Participation. Deadline of registration is April 7. Only 25 participants will be accepted on a first come first serve basis.

For more information, call Dom Marwin Gomez, OSB, Vice 2011 coordinator, Monastery of the Transfiguration, San Jose, Mabalacat City, Beliefnet, 2010. Fax (088.220.2273) or (088.223.4708). Email: dommarwin@yahoo.com. Or send a text message to (0917.630.3368).

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Lighter-than-usual sports footwear

ADIZERO II the newest lightweight sports performance footwear collection from Adidas. It's designed to enable all sports lovers—be they from, indoor, runners, rugby, basketball or tennis players—to perform revolutions.

Using the lightest materials on the market, adiZero footwear can get you faster to the ball or finishing line. The newest collection offers lightweight sports shoes for basketball, football, tennis and running.

For basketball

The adiZero Pro 1.5 is a high-performance basketball shoe with the ideal balance of fit and light weight, giving Derrick Rose the playing edge. It is Rose's first signature shoe and, at 12.9 ounces, the lightest Adidas basketball shoe to date.

The upper is inspired by Derrick's speed on the court and his love to fly at the fashion event from the game. The mid-sole is manufactured with an anatomically profiled footbed for optimized comfort. adiPRENE as seen in Rose's for impact absorption. Spinfusion fuses the external support with the responsive forefoot system for great heel fit, midfoot integrity and proper forefoot movement.

The outsole features new herringbone traction pattern technology—a lightweight system that adapts to Derrick's natural movement to give players maximum stability and traction on the court. The tongue has a unique lacing system that allows user to pop it forward for easy on and off.

The adiZero Pro 1.5 is available for P5,495.

For football

The new Adidas F50 adiZero Prime is the lightest Adidas football boot. Weighing a mere 150 grams, the Prime is 15 grams lighter than its F50 adiZero predecessor. Using a unique SpringFrame outsole, the F50 adiZero Prime is able to have light weight with stability through its ground-to drops. Using the next generation of SprintFrame, adiLite Twin and engineered TPU (Thermoplyurethane) support boosts weight-to-stability upper have and portable momentum mobility and control. The Adidas F50 adiZero Prime is available for P8,995 in selected Adidas Sports Performance stores.

For tennis

The adiZero Feather tennis shoe is an aggressive, light and low-cost shoe designed for the needs of players such as Andy Roddick and Tsonga. Demands Medusa and duo footwear.

The Rise TPU frame and accompanying Torsion bar ensure are not only that the world's best tennis players get all the mobility they need, but also the light- ness possible there to make them quickest in the ball.

Cushioning and comfort have not been compromised with ADIPRENE in the heel and ADIPRENE+ in the forefoot, while an Ortholite sockliner

completes the Adizero finishes.

Wear and tear has also been addressed with ADIWEAR and ADITUFF, ensuring long life in the toughest of handcourt environments. The adiZero Feather tennis shoe is available for P6,295.

For running

The adiZero F50 Runner weighs only 140g, making this shoe superfast. Its lining mirrors lightweight Technologies featured in the adiZero F50 Runner include adiPRENE+, a synthetic cushioning used to protect the forefoot and provides a responsive and dynamic cushioning.

The outsole has ADIWEAR, an extremely durable, long-wearing rubber used in high-abrasion areas to avoid early wear and tear. The adiZero F50 Runner also has the innovative Torsion System, a lightweight arch support that allows the forefoot and rear foot to move independently for better motion adaptation and stability.

The Torsion System is fully engineered and provides a unique transition from heel to toe for both female and male footwear products. Adidas developed PerfMotion, which is an industry-leading heel decoupling technology that's been incorporated into the adiZero F50 Runner to deliver outstanding performance.

PerfMotion is a fluid spring heel system that is decoupled, allowing it to adapt in a player's individual running style. The foot control cures a much smoother, balanced and natural touchdown, with PerfMotion as it sets like an additional joint in the heel and is engineered to adapt to each runner's personal style. For Marathon elite athletes that require low and precision velocity. The adiZero F50 Runner is available for P6,295.

Facebook game

To further bring the lightweight nature and speed of the adiZero franchise to life, Adidas has also created a special Facebook game called the "adiZero Fast Arcader" that will be launched across six countries in South East Asia—Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam.

Targeted at the game-loving, sneaker-wearing youth, the adiZero Fast Arcade is looking to pit lightning speed skills of the player to beat the clock and "The Boxer" in the Facebook game to collect to score more points.

To join, follow the following steps:

1) Visit www.facebook.com/Visit and Like the "adiZero Fast Arcade" Activate

2) Launch and play the game

An Complete all four (4) levels to score the highest score.

3) Share points online.

The latest adiZero's products are now available in selected adidas sports performance stores.

When eating for sports or fitness regimen, timing is...

From page D1

•Have something 30 to 60 minutes before your workout.

Before your warm-up, while on your way to the sports event, have something light to eat and/or drink like cereal, cookies, sports drink, sports gel or sports bar.

•Have an eating and drinking strategy with physical activities lasting more than 60 minutes.

Any type of exercise, especially the endurance type like running or cycling, requires an extra amount of energy. Have a sports drink containing an adequate amount of carbohydrates and electrolytes to delay fatigue and sustain performance throughout the event. Most athletes and active executives are used to consuming sports gels every 45-60 minutes, and some can just survive on sports drinks and a piece of banana or light bread with jam.

Eating after a workout

After joining a 5-km or a 10-km race, you need to wait for your friends and allow an hour or more to pass before you realize that you haven't eaten anything yet. Now it is important to realize that having a post-workout snack is necessary for better recovery and an improved performance in your next session, maybe a day or two after your race.

•Have something to eat and drink 20-30 minutes after your endurance or strength workout.

Make sure you always bring an emergency post-workout snack in your sports bag or your small hydration belt. Be a sports fan and in case there's a delay in your post-workout snack. A sports bar or a recovery shake, which can also be considered a snack, usually contains a balanced amount of carbs, proteins and fat, but that's still not enough to sustain your post-exercise needs.

•Eat a complete meal 30-60 minutes after your workout.

This can be brown rice with chicken or lean steak with sauteed veggies, tuna and a sauteed fruit plate to fill you up nicely three quarters. You may have a sandwich, but it lacks protein, which is needed to repair your damaged muscle fibers during and after a workout. You can still drink a reparative recovery drink, which usually contains more proteins.

Avoiding weight gain

The easiest way to improve performance while avoiding weight gain or continuing to lose extra weight is to focus on the quality and quantity of foods, by monitoring everything you take during the day and the amount and type of exercise you do.

The lighter you are, or if your weight is just appreciable for your height, the easier it is to perform better and to move faster in any sports event.

•Drink alcohol in moderation.

If you are a regular wine drinker, distribute the amount evenly and avoid splurging on more than two glasses of wine or more than two bottles of beer per occasion, or you can train yourself how to control your drinking.

Jennifer Pineda providing extra calories that are not really required in your training or competition, excessive alcohol can either you to consume more calories while drinking and the day after.

•Eliminate the extras as much as possible.

Athletes usually find it difficult to lose weight since they always need to eat more often during the day. Their bone metabolism makes them hungry more often, and they need to cope with their nutritional needs to perform well in their sports.

If you consider yourself an active person who needs to eat more than 90 minutes a day, you might also be experimenting the same thing.

The best approach is to eliminate the food in your diet that you don't really need, and that only adds up to your daily calorie intake, like chocolate bars, oily and creamy sauces of viands, bags of chips and potatoes.

Arnold Jan-carlo Aquino, dietitian

This type of diet makes sense since one's immune system deteriorates, with his endurance and strength performance, to a decline in mood colour burn is also experimented. Long-term sports participation cannot be expected, and there is a positive dynamic of regaining weight.

E-mail the author at weight@abs-cbn.com

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Nicky

Confused and depressed at boyfriend's sudden exit

DEAR EMILY:

I have been widowed for seven years now, with three children—one married, the other two still in college. They are my pride in life.

My boyfriend of three years decided to break up with me recently after he told me that I still prioritized my children instead of planning for our future. I know I should start learning and carving a new life for myself, but I continue to belong a hands on mother to my children. One day, he just decided to put an end to our relationship since he felt he was not my top priority.

That, to me, sounded selfish. How could he not understand how a mother would give her life and make sacrifices for her children? Was I being unfair to him? He also has three grown-up children, but he doesn't give as much attention to them as a mother would.

I tried reconciling with him to start making plans for our own future, but he just suddenly texted 100 chapters and left me. I was shocked. We were a loving couple. He had no big quarrels for the past three years.

He turned out to court me after he met his high-school classmates during a grand reunion in their province last December. When he came back in January, he started avoiding me, and finally told me it would be best if we remained friends instead of a couple. He said that since I was still not ready for marriage, he couldn't wait any longer for me since both of us were not getting younger anymore.

I am now very confused and depressed. Did he end the relationship because he could not wait for another two years, or is he just influenced in that high-school friend he reunited with last December, making him decide to end our relationship that fast?

–DISHEARTS 06

Whatever his reasons are, and as much as you like to contest, he dumped you. Dumped you like this proverbial hot potato, he just moved on you, pure and simple.

Why make a long and short story of it and dwell on your rejection? Why not take that self-pity by yourself? Whether it came like a bolt of lightning or crept in quietly like the sun over Aurora's eastern Clouds, he has the confidence to leave you two years going, and just abandoned the road.

Instead of you moving on, you're still stuck. Hanging on under to the hope of the moment and disappointing that the inner emotions are saved. You are endlessly, but it could get there eventually. Yours took three years. They are not bound by common

Let there be no regrets in your mind, only hope, that someday, you'll meet someone better–again

whereby those who emerge are pain-ultimately-murderer.

Those relationships are shaped, woven and tainted primarily by words, and are good only as long as the two maintaining parties are united in spirit. It's like dancing the tango. Two people are completely enthused by the flesh—as well as the music. A relationship that will never wound-no-cuts—the philosophical thought of our head shopping.

If you met this person once, three years ago, might there be that wonderful chance that you would meet another one-doing-the-rock? Let there be no regrets in your mind, only hope, that someday, you'll meet someone better—again.

How did that song go again?

"It's a long long way to Tipperary/But my heart's right there."

E-mail: emarcos@inquirer.com.ph
(SUBJECT: LOVELY)

ENTERTAINMENT

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K-Pop group No. 1 overall

THE TOP-SELLING albums in the country for the week Feb. 28-March 6 based on Odyssey Music & Video's nationwide sales reports:

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BPI Get Started

BPI MAXI-SAVER

Real Thrills!

Kiss The Bride not just for couples

REVIEW

KISS The Bride plays accessible jazz.

LIONEL RIVA in debut CD tonight at Greenwich on Jupiter Street, Makati, is the jazz band Kiss The Bride. The band's name does not necessarily mean it's only for couples.

The Inquirer got an advance copy of its album, titled "Stroke," composed of 12 all original tracks.

The kind of jazz it plays is very accessible. In fact the band's percussionist, Ely Arzaga, calls it "pop jazz" or smooth jazz—something that paints either because it borders on pop music.

But why hate something that sounds good and easy to appreciate, eh? We've actually made a few pleasant discoveries while listening to the album these past few days.

First, the songs—mostly instrumentals—reveal an earnest desire of the band's main composer, pianist Tony Basora, to uncover the beauty of dynamic interplay which is the essence of jazz.

In other words, no musician among the group's seven members begs the limelight. While Francis Jay Cui Jr. the melodies, and guitarist Joey Pitiot (Basora's trusted and unobtrusive sidekick) Vince Lobo is in the calm, the rhythmic balance-ensured by bassist Kingsley de los Santos, drummer Greg Gascon and Arzaga are no less impressive.

Second, the best way to enjoy the band's music is no longer about terms like smooth jazz and just open your ears...because you'll hear more than you expect. For instance, on the first track, "Hey Jesse Jo Me," there are echoes of the Italian band Ritrattos Impost on the in-

www.ex

ELASTIC of screaming guitars reverberated during the Eraserheads concert recently at the Araneta Coliseum, courtesy of the band's mentor, Dton DeLeon (right). The band's metal-meets-punk sound guided frontman Ezra Mahood's (left) growling vocals. ROVELL GUMPAD

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3. RED RIDING HOOD
4. THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
5. WHAT'S THAT SIGN?
6. RANGO
7. RED RIDING HOOD
8. I AM NUMBER FOUR

MEGAMALL

1. RED RIDING HOOD
2. THE EAGLE
3. LIBYA
4. RANGO
5. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON
6. I AM NUMBER FOUR
7. WHAT'S THAT SIGN?

FAIRVIEW

1. THE EAGLE
2. RANGO
3. RED RIDING HOOD
4. THE ADJUSTMENT BUREAU
5. WHAT'S THAT SIGN?
6. RED RIDING HOOD
7. I AM NUMBER FOUR

CITY MARKET

1. RED RIDING HOOD
2. THE EAGLE
3. LIBYA
4. RANGO
5. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON
6. I AM NUMBER FOUR

CITY BASELAGO

1. RED RIDING HOOD
2. THE EAGLE
3. LIBYA
4. RANGO
5. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON
6. I AM NUMBER FOUR

CITY ROBINSONS

Band behind Chavacano song gains fame

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Zamboangeño students forming rock bands were the unofficial popularity of a local college band across the country and even abroad.

Makiba (which means cute in Mexican Spanish) has been making waves after a video of its song, "Proper Wiko," was uploaded on YouTube more than a year ago.

Written in Zamboanga's language, Chavacano, "Proper" features a woman encouraging suitors after being dumped by a lover.

YouTube viewers from as far as Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries have been keeping private on a song they could only partly understand. Chavacano mixes Spanish words with Visayan and other local languages.

Fan of Makiba's original members, first "Wiko" Encinarin, said he sends "Proper" from personal experience. He used Chavacano for the lyrics because he wanted to showcase his native tongue.

"I was just hoping that someone will appreciate our Chavacano songs," Wiko said.

After it gained fame on YouTube, a local radio station started playing the song.

Wiko Records has moved it signed Makiba to Universal Records.

—Aida Alpeda, Inquirer Mindanao

Kiss . . .

From page E1

ics before it settles down to an introspective, mid-tempo mood. The next most memorable, "Open Up My Mind" and "High on You," shuffle on Latin-flavored beats.

Third, the element of surprise in some of the songs' arrangements. "Gary Barlow's Boys" and "Thanks For My Broth" are fine examples of choral and tempo changes that make Kiss The Bride an interesting band.

As it rehabs the album engages listeners to relate to their inner feelings, whether newfound or from a past experience: Joy, bliss, anxiety, romance, rumination, regret, remembrance...they all come in sufficient doses.

The duty of love has Kiss The Bride cross-out with the album's serendipitous. As key, bassist and manager Cocky Bolipata recalls, the band was ready with the songs and raring to record them when Jose Mari Logdimen (of Sinosaurs and radio station Energy 106.7 fame) offered to bankroll the EP. He said he did it because there's a lack of local material on the airwaves to play for, and he believes in the band's talent.

After the CD launch at Sotomo's, Kiss The Bride will play at Hardin's Jose Rizal on Thursday, Theobroma comes Timog, Quezon City) on March 23 and Charlie's Speakeasy (Malugay Street, Makati) on March 29.

Pocholo Concepcion

Ayala Malls Cinemas
Trinoma
Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Circuit
Ayala Malls Capitol Central
Ayala Malls Vertis North
Ayala Malls Cinema Center Cebu
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Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Capitol Central
Ayala Malls Vertis North
Ayala Malls Cinema Center Cebu
Ayala Malls Capitol Commons
Ayala Malls Feliz
Ayala Malls Capitol Central
Ayala Malls Capitol Commons
Ayala Malls Cinema Center Cebu
Ayala Malls Feliz
Ayala Malls Vertis North
Ayala Malls Manila Bay
Ayala Malls Circuit
Ayala Malls Trinoma

What makes show biz circus bearable

ANGEL Aquino owned me about the clarification I wrote in my previous column regarding the rumored new gay in her life.

Her message made me doze "I ain't had words to tell you how much I appreciate what you wrote in your column. That's what all this really is. Thank you so so much. I felt truest in my love after reading it. It felt like a right, warm hug, for us grateful ang drun sheet hetsel. Thereyou go."

Celebrities like regal make the show biz circus bearable. I'm blessed to have found true friends like her in this natural "world" we work in. Although we are in show biz, truth is we are one of those few

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Gorrejido

in the sky's the limit.

Evening Diane

Could it be true that Ely Saniano is now dating TV personality **Ariana** Bao? Was the rumor from beach frolicking around Dingaan Siargao to see his life, though? Kinda it doe it still do seemingly?

New love

Ana Roces has found love anew, after her marriage was annulled two years ago. The new man in her life is a lawyer, **Randy Quintos**. Hmm. Randy. Rule: baby boy, bisexual, baptized normally. Razz ay is to Bill Moore.

ANA Roces

Charity

Appie and Regine Alcasid will hold a celebrity "Okay Okay" on April 23-17 at the Hil Solaston Hotel Nave Bay in World Trade Center Pasay.

The Fundraiser aims to help the Esperci Foundation build and rehabilitate schools in the country. Mother Lily Monteverde has already donated P1 million. Appie and Regine humbly solicit the help of anyone who want to donate anything from to be sold at auction.

Appie is also organizing a benefit concert at the Araneta Coliseum on April 24 to raise funds for Overseas Filipino Workers who have lost their jobs and jobs. Business is in everything the island people does.

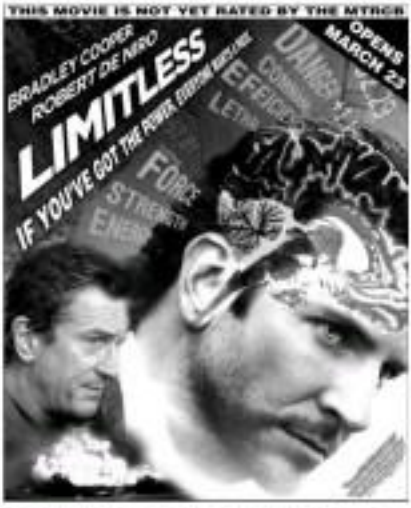
E-mail watertightdoctor@yahoo.com

Surprise party

Dennis Trillo threw a surprise birthday party for host Bb Mo Mora at Quality Hotel.

"He was clueless," she said. "I pretended to let him host my birthday party at my resto. It took two days of preparation with his mom. He was super happy because almost all his close friends and relatives came. First time to sing-organize ng party for the love of it." If Dennis's heart is as

PAWIE Bartolome



K-Pop band...

From page E1

Overall

1) GD & Top, "2D & Top," Universal Records; 2) Willie Revillame, "I Love You," Viva Records; 3) Taylor Swift, "Speak Now (Deluxe Edition)," MCA Music; 4) Various Artists, "Twilight Breaking Dawn 2011," Sony Music; 5) Willie Revillame, "Willing Willie," Viva Records; 6) Justin Bieber, "Never Say Never: The Remixes," MCA Music; 7) Bruno Mars, "Doo-Wops & Hooligans," Warner Music; 8) Various artists, "Pop Idol Season 2," Universal Records; 9) Taylor Swift, "Taylor Swift," MCA Music; 10) Various Artists, "Best Of Prince & Silverchip," Music Icons Music

OPM

1) Willie Revillame, "I Love You," Viva Records; 2) Willie Revillame, "Willing Willie," Viva Records; 3) Vicoy Artists, "By Popular Demand 3," Universal Records; 4) Jose Feldstrom, "Rubberfly," Star Records; 5) Joel Feldstrom, "I'll Be Anything For Love," Star Records; 6) Gloc-9, "Tolonggrafe," Sony Music; 7) Mael Calimagan, "Parisian," Universal Records; 8) Regine Velasquez, "Parisian," Universal Records; 9) Viola Bernad, "Decades 2," Star Records; 10) Various Artists, "Opal 2," Vicor Music

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